

Hafa Adai!

House unanimously passes revised budget bill. **PAGE 2**

San Nicolas frets over municipalities' meager budgets. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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IN RESPONSE TO DECISION TO LESSEN RELIANCE ON CHINA

MVA: We're up to the challenge

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER



Cavanagh

In response to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' recent pronouncement about steering the CNMI away from relying on its China tourism market, the Marianas Visitors Authority says it's up to the challenge.

We are Americans. As such, we must take into account the security and sovereignty of our nation.

Last week, Palacios wrote Adm. John Aquilino, commander of the U.S. Indo-Pa-

cific Command, stating his commitment to advancing U.S.

See MVA on Page 4

Asiana to launch 4 times weekly flights to Saipan

Less than two weeks after ending service to the destination, Asiana Airlines has announced they will be relaunching direct flights from Seoul to the Marianas next month.

According to the airline's official website, Asiana will operate four weekly flights from Incheon to Saipan beginning on April 27, 2023. In anticipation of high travel demand next month.

See ASIANA on Page 4

BMV director pleads not guilty



Bureau of Motor Vehicles director Juana Deleon Guerrero and her lawyer, Robert Torres, exit the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Days until
'touchback rule'
takes effect on
Sept. 30, 2023:
193

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The director of the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Juana Deleon Guerrero, has pleaded not guilty to the license fraud charge filed against her by the U.S. government.

Deleon Guerrero appeared

See BMV on Page 4

John Terlaje 'aces' Hyundai IONIQ 5 at NMC Golf Open



MARK RABAGO

John L. Terlaje, second from left, won a brand new 2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 SEL from Triple J Motors after aching Hole No. 4 on Day 1 of the NMC Golf Open last Saturday at the Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort east course. Also in photo are, from left, Triple J Enterprises Inc. vice president Michael Sablan, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Triple J Motors general manager Sean Ficke, Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, and NMC vice president of Advancement and Administration Frankie Elliptico.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Bettina "Betty" Terlaje will now happily allow her husband, John, to play golf on the weekends, after the 51-year-old Commonwealth

Health Center staff made a hole-in-one in the fourth hole of the NMC Golf Open last Saturday at the Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

The C Flight player came in 13th overall in his divi-

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INSIDE



BUSINESS

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce wants waiver of in-person interviews for CW applicants.

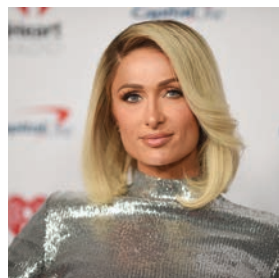
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NATION

Donald Trump's calls for protests ahead of his indictment generate mostly muted reactions.

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LIFE & STYLE

Paris Hilton is adding her voice to the chorus of women speaking out to reclaim their narrative.

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Local

House unanimously passes revised budget bill

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously passed Friday afternoon a bill that repeals and re-enacts Public Law 22-22, or the fiscal year 2023 appropriations and budget law.

All 20 House members voted “yes” to the passage of House Bill 23-31, House Substitute 1. The bill was then transmitted to the Senate for action.

As this developed, the Senate agreed during a special session

late Friday afternoon to refer House Bill 23-31, HS1, to the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota).

Manglona said the committee will meet this week to go over the House’s version of the revised budget bill and will discuss the changes that they made.

This comes soon after the Senate adopted House Concurrent Resolution 23-1 that agrees with the projected \$116.19 million total local revenue and resources of the CNMI gov-

ernment that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios had identified as available for appropriation, to reflect proposed revisions to the fiscal year 2023 budget law, Public Law 22-22.

During the House session Friday, Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) formally introduced House Bill 23-31 in order to make revised appropriations of local funds for the operations of the CNMI government. Yumul said the bill will provide revised budget author-

ity for the government for fiscal year 2023, starting from March 31, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2023.

The bill would also give Gov. Arnold I. Palacios with up to 505% reprogramming authority for the Executive Branch, but not to funds for the Legislature or Judiciary, as well as to funds appropriated to the legislative delegations.

Yumul said he moved to place the bill on that day’s calendar for action due to the time sensitivity of the bill as the American Rescue Plan Act

funding—on which much of the previous budget depended on—is running out.

Before passing the legislation, Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) offered a substitute version that would require the Finance secretary to establish an account for deficit reduction. Attao said this will allow the administration to address the deficit of the CNMI government if it manages to collect more revenue than expected.

“As per the Constitution, we have two years to exhaust the deficits. That gives them the

flexibility,” he said.

The House adopted Attao’s floor amendments and subsequently passed the bill.

House minority leader Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) said the members of the minority voted in favor of the revised budget bill to ensure that government employees will be sustained at a 72-hour pay period instead of 64 hours.

“At the heart of our decision to support this bill is simply the livelihood of our government workforce and their families,” San Nicolas said.

‘DHSEM will get \$1.48M more for its COVID-19 relief efforts’

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) disclosed over the weekend that the CNMI Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will receive \$1.48 million more to support its COVID-19 relief efforts.

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter that DHSEM has received over \$55 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency grants for COVID-19 relief efforts so far.

He said FEMA announced Tuesday last week that DHSEM will get \$1,484,361 to provide for the Marianas’ protective measures against the pandemic.

These protective measures include COVID-19 testing and screening operations at community testing sites; public outreach for health and safety information; and inventory management of medical supplies, equipment, and personnel.

The delegate also disclosed that Patrick Guerrero, the Governor’s Authorized Representative, briefed him last Tuesday on the continuing work on typhoon recovery projects.

Sablan said one of his priorities in Congress is to make sure that FEMA responds in a timely manner to CNMI agencies. (Ferdie De la Torre)

2023 NMI Congressional Art contest starts

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan invites high school students in the Northern Mariana Islands to participate in the 15th annual Congressional Art Competition for a chance to have their artwork publicly displayed at the U.S. Capitol for one year.

“This will be the 15th year that the Northern Mariana Islands will have one of our student’s artwork showcased at the Capitol,” Sablan said. “I look forward to seeing the creativity of our young talented artists.”

The art competition is free and open to all high school students. Students have until Friday, April 21, 2023, to submit their artwork via delivery or mail to one of the congressional district offices on Saipan, Rota, or Tinian, which are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm.

Congressional art competition rules require that submit-

ted artwork be original, two-dimensional works. Eligible artwork includes paintings, drawings, collages, prints, mixed media art, computer-generated art, and photography. Artwork must also be suitable for public display.

This year’s submissions will be judged based on originality, technical difficulty, creativity, communication, effectiveness, and overall appearance. A panel of local artists will select the winning entry.

Aside from having their work displayed in the Capitol, the winner will also be invited to the national reception held in Washington DC.

Contest guidelines and student release forms are available at <https://sablan.house.gov/serving-you/art-competition>. For more information, contact the congressional office at (670) 323-2647 or Kilili@mail.house.gov. (PR)

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San Nicolas frets over municipalities' meager operational budgets

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) has underscored the need to explore additional

funding sources to support the operations of the Office of the Mayor of Tinian, as well as the offices of mayors of Rota, Saipan, and Northern Islands. During a House of Rep-

resentatives session Friday in which the representatives passed the legislation to amend the current fiscal year 2023 budget, San Nicolas, who is the House minority leader, was the only member who raised a concern on the floor regarding the meager budget for operations for each municipality. He noted that these offices are rooted in the community delivering essential public services.

Under the revised budget, San Nicolas said, the municipality of Tinian will receive a meager \$28,379 for its operations for the remainder of the fiscal year 2023. The

lawmaker said the mayor of Rota will receive a little less at \$22,326 for operations, the mayor of Saipan will get a measly \$8,089, and the mayor of Northern Islands, just \$3,706.

San Nicolas noted that funding for operations directly benefits the people of each municipality. "These are not personnel funds that make public programs and services possible," he added.

San Nicolas said he wishes that he could give the \$15,000 allocation from his office to assist the municipality of Ti-

nian and Aguiguan, but the CNMI Constitution and the Planning and Budgeting Act do not allow him to do that.

"Nonetheless, I stand ready to work with the members of the House, the Senate, and the administration to find additional resources to assist all the municipalities with their operations," he said.

With an 11% surplus in revenues collected in the first and second quarter, San Nicolas said they are hoping that the third and fourth quarter collections will be even better. He said this is important so they

can shift additional resources back to the families that will be impacted by the reduced working hours.

The lawmaker said revenue collections in the third and fourth quarters are historically higher than collections in the first and second quarters.

San Nicolas and other minority members—Reps. Roy Ada (R-Saipan), Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona (R-Saipan), and Joseph Flores (Ind-Saipan)—later voted in favor of the revised budget bill to ensure that government employees will be paid at a 72-hour pay period instead of 64 hours.

Air Force F-22 Raptors make their first appearance at Clark Air Base

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor stealth aircraft have been training out of a Philippine air base that was once part of America's largest overseas military community.

Photographs of the Raptors—the first deployed by the Air Force to Clark Air Base—were tweeted Wednesday and Thursday by numerous accounts in the Philippines, including by the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

"For the first time in history, two F-22 'Raptor' stealth fighter jets from @PACAF (Pacific Air Forces) landed at Clark Air Base to reinforce commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty," the embassy tweeted Thursday.

U.S. and Philippine pilots discussed training, aircraft capabilities and future collaboration, the embassy wrote.

The planes belong to the 525th Fighter Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, PACAF spokeswoman Capt. Allison Delury wrote in an email Friday to Stars and Stripes.

"This exchange emphasizes the strong military relationship between historic allies and confirms our commitment to our partnership with the Philippines," she said.

The visit to Clark was not the first time F-22s have been in the Philippines, Delury said, without providing details of the earlier visits.

The fifth-generation fighters are worth \$143 million each and can fly more than twice the speed of sound with a range of more than 1,850 miles, according to the Air Force. Its inventory includes 183 of the air superiority fighters.

Clark and nearby Subic Naval Base formed the largest U.S. overseas military community before both were damaged in the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo and, soon after, returned to the Philippines.

Late last year, a pair of Japanese F-15J Eagle fighters visited Clark, the first time the Japan Air Self-Defense Force deployed its fighters to a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the service said in a Dec. 8 tweet.

Raptors from Tinian, near Guam, also took part in the Agile Reaper exercise, which recently concluded, according

to an Air Force news release Wednesday.

The exercise, on Guam and Tinian, involved airmen from the 673rd Air Base Wing and 3rd Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, the release said.

The training focused on agile combat employment, the ability to move aircraft rapidly to a network of smaller airfields in the Western Pacific to avoid being targeted by Chinese missiles in the event of war.

"I've told all the Wing Commanders, the numbered Air Force commanders and PACAF that I expect them to take risk," Gen. Ken Wilsbach, Pacific Air Forces commander, said in the release. "I expect them to get better and better. They've got to be able to meet the mission taskings, all the communication, all that's required to be in the right place, at the right time, with your airpower. That's why we have Raptors at Tinian, so that they can practice those skills."

The F-22s involved in Agile Reaper were assigned to the 525th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, which is deployed to Kadena Air Base, Japan, according to the news release.

The Air Force on Nov. 1 began a two-year phased withdrawal of two squadrons of F-15 Eagle fighters from Kadena. Alaska-based Raptors began a rotation at the base on Nov. 4.

The presence of advanced aircraft in the region demonstrates their potentially wider role, and the possibility of a permanent presence expressed in June by the head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Adm. John Aquilino.

"I would envision that that capability is certainly—well, it's certainly desirable, but we would like to get to that," he told the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a think tank in Washington, D.C. "That ability to, like I said, operate in contested space, fifth-generation capabilities, whether they be F-22, F-35, are critically important to the ability to deliver deterrence."

A permanent contingent of Air Force fifth-generation fighters west of the International Date Line is a "desirable" option as the U.S. seeks to deter an increasingly assertive China, Aquilino said.



PUTC HEARING

Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan testifies before the Senate Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications during a public hearing Wednesday. Also in the photo are Rota Mayor Aubry Hocog, next to Aldan, PUTC members, Marianas Visitors Authority and Commonwealth Ports Authority officials, and Marianas Southern Airways vice president William Giles.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



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PUBLIC NOTICE

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds)
March 21, 2023

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Annual Community Assessment (ACA) Report for Program Year 2021 is available for review.

The Report contains information regarding the CNMI's performance in addressing and fulfilling the Community Planning and Development (CPD) grant requirements.

The report is available on NMHC's website at www.nmhc.gov.net by clicking on the "Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)" menu tab and at the NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review the report must contact the Planning Division for arrangements by calling (670) 234-9447/6866 during regular business hours.

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman of the Board

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Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Petitioner Bernadita T. Seman

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE) CIVIL ACTION
MATTER) NO. 23-0016-CV
OF THE)
ESTATE OF) NOTICE OF CONTINUED
CATALINA) HEARING ON PETITION TO
T. SEMAN,) ADMIT ESTATE TO PROBATE
Decedent.) AND APPOINTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATRIX
)
) Next Court Date: April 6, 2023
) Time: 10:00 A.M.
) Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE CATALINA T. SEMAN OR HER ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the foregoing matter is continued to April 6, 2023 at 10 a.m.

On March 2, 2023 Petitioner Bernadita T. Seman appeared on her Verified Petition to Admit Estate into Probate and Appointment as Administratrix for the Estate of Catalina T. Seman. Ms. Seman appeared with counsel Robert T. Torres. Mr. Torres informed the Court that he had been informed that the heirs of deceased heir Ines S. Ada had indicated that they proposed decedent's nephew Francisco S. Ada as a co-administrator. Mr. Torres informed the Court that Ms. Seman would not agree to be co-administrator but that if Mr. Ada wished to propose himself, Ms. Seman would concede subject to his examination as a proposed Administrator. Further, Ms. Seman informed that she would have to be reimbursed for her fees and costs in filing the petition in this matter. Mr. Torres informed that since there is no stipulation and no notice given to other heirs, the matter may need to be continued to give proper notice to other heirs.

Matthew T. Gregory appeared with his client, heir Remedio Buniag. Ms. Buniag registered her objection to Ms. Seman's appointment as administratrix. Further, heir Jose T. Seman appeared pro se and informed the Court that he supported Ms. Seman as the Administratrix and did not agree to Mr. Ada as the Administrator. The Court then discussed the matter with the parties and heirs, directing that the parties/heirs may confer but that proper notice be given as to the proposals made or being considered.

This Notice of Hearing shall be published, and all heirs/creditors/claimants shall be given notice and they may file any agreements or position statements on or before the hearing date on April 6, 2023.

/s/
Clerk of Court/ Deputy Clerk of Court

'Frozen MPLT \$224K investment a very expensive lesson'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Public Land Trust's frozen \$224,000 investment in a Russian banking and financial services company is a very expensive lesson for MPLT, according to Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan).

This comes soon after it was learned that some \$224,000 of MPLT's money that's invested with Sberbank of Russia is frozen due to sanctions imposed by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Babauta asked about the frozen investment during the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments

and Government Investigations' confirmation hearing last Friday for Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' appointment of former Education commissioner Dr. Rita Aldan Hocog, former MPLT Trust board chair Alvaro Santos, and Tinian businessman Phillip Mendiola Long, to serve as members of MPLT board.

Babauta chairs the committee. MPLT trustee chair Vianney B. Hocog disclosed the frozen investment in his administrative report to Palacios last March 1, stating that this was the result of sanctions imposed by the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control against Russia.

Babauta said she understands

that it was MPLT's non-U.S. equity manager, WCM Investment Management LLC's decision to invest with Sberbank, but that she could not see how MPLT trustees did not know about such investment. Babauta said they should call an informal meeting with MPLT trustees to be informed about the situation.

Sablan said if they are confirmed they can return and give an update to the EAGI Committee.

Sablan said the frozen investment was a huge surprise to everyone, even herself. "This is a lesson learned for all of us," she said.

Babauta replied "it's a very expensive lesson."

Santos said that WCM, as MPLT's discretionary manager, is someone that is entrusted with the investment without the investor getting involved in buying or selling.

Santos said his initial reaction after reading about it in the newspaper was that the war in Ukraine started a year ago and it was followed by the U.S. sanctions imposed on Russia. He said WCM should have seen the red flag and should have immediately considered selling or pulling out the money.

Santos said he has not answer as to why WCM decided to stick with the investment until it was frozen.

MPLT trustee chair Hocog disclosed that frozen are \$198,000 and \$26,408 for the MPLT's in-

vestment portfolio in the General Fund and American Memorial Park Fund accounts, respectively. Hocog said these securities are continuously being monitored by Raymond James, MPLT's investment consultant.

He said WCM notified MPLT last month of a sanctioned security that was purchased by WCM in the MPLT's General Fund and Park Fund accounts.

WCM operations manager Julian-na Jones said that, due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control implemented sanctions on key sectors of Russia's economy, including Sberbank of Russia.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

JKPL closed on Friday for Covenant Day

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will be closed on Friday, March 24, 2023, in recognition of Commonwealth Covenant Day. The JKPL will resume normal operational hours on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at 9:30am. Wishing you all a glorious Commonwealth Covenant Day as we reflect on the creation of our Commonwealth in political union with the United States! Let us celebrate this important part of our

CNMI history as a people and move forward in our journey of creating a better future for the next generations! Biba, Marianas! (PR)

JRM introduces Quality of Life Program

The Joint Region Marianas team is coming to Saipan to host and introduce its Quality of Life Program to the CNMI business community on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, from 10am to 11:30am at the Pedro P.

Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

The JRM team will also be doing one-on-one sessions with the business community from 12pm to 7:30pm after their presentation. Call the Saipan Chamber of Commerce office at (670) 234-7150 for more information about the one-on-one sessions and how your business can gain exposure from the Quality of Life Program.

For more information, please call the SCC office or email contactus@saipanchamber.org. (PR)

GOLF

From Page 1

sion with a stratospheric 45-over, but was the biggest winner of the two-day tournament after taking home a brand new 2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 SEL from Triple J Motors. The sticker price is a whopping \$60,000-plus.

Terlaje, who works at the Physical Therapy department of the hospital, said his family is overjoyed with the new car. "My family is really happy to win this car. I don't know what else to say. ...It's a nice car and I guess [being electric] it will save us gas."

Terlaje winning the top-of-the-line electric vehicle—with all the bells and whistles—comes nearly 20 years since Alex Aquiningoc won a brand new 2005 Ford Escape as well as trips

to Hong Kong and the Philippines for acing the 17th hole in the 9th Saipan Golf Tournament of Champions, also at the Kagman golf course.

But, unlike Aquiningoc, who is a seasoned golfer, Terlaje actually just returned to the sport after quitting in 2014.

"You know, I've been playing for a long time, but I quit 11 years ago. So only after COVID-19 did I come back," said Terlaje, who is a Marianas Golfers Association member.

As for any special technique prior to hitting the 1-in-a-million shot on Day 1, Terlaje, who idolizes local golf pro Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho, admitted he didn't do anything out of the ordinary.

"I just grabbed the usual iron I use on that hole—No. 7—and I always had difficulty on the fourth hole as it's either I swing it short and hit the

water or hit the jungle," he said.

Triple J Motors general manager Sean Ficke said the auto dealership is elated to be part of history and share in the Terlaje family's joy of winning the IONIQ 5.

"It's a top-of-the-line, all-wheel drive, all-leather electric vehicle. So very excited and want to congratulate John Terlaje on winning this. ...We've put up I don't know how many cars over the last several years and it's exciting to see somebody finally win," said Ficke, while also congratulating Northern Marianas College for hosting a superbly ran two-day tournament.

Aside from the 2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 SEL with Navigation and AWD, Triple J Motors also sponsored another hole-in-one prize—a brand new 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander—on the west course.

BMV

From Page 1

yesterday before U.S. District Court for the NMI magistrate judge Heather Kennedy with her lawyer, Robert Torres, to answer to the indictment filed against her.

Deleon Guerrero, through Torres, pleaded not guilty to one count of conspiring with others to unlawfully produce an identification document.

Deleon Guerrero was also questioned about her eligibility for a court-appointed counsel and she was found non-indigent.

After pleading not guilty, Kennedy set Deleon Guerrero's trial for May 23, at 10am before releasing her under her own recognizance.

Also present at yesterday's hearing were Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Haejun Park, and assistant U.S. attorneys Ashley Kost

and Albert Flores Jr.

According to DPS, Deleon Guerrero has since been placed on indefinite administrative leave following the issuance of the indictment against her.

Flores filed over the weekend the indictment against Deleon Guerrero in the U.S. District Court for the NMI on a charge of conspiring with others to unlawfully produce an identification document.

According to the indictment, Deleon Guerrero conspired with Li Yongde, also known as Ivan, from about Sept. 1, 2021, through about Oct. 31, 2022, to unlawfully produce a CNMI driver's license.

"[The defendants] knowingly and intentionally conspired and agreed with each other, and other persons known and unknown to the grand jury, to commit an offense against the United States: specifically, to knowingly and without lawful authority produce an identification

document, authentication feature, and false identification document, to wit a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands driver licenses, and the prohibited production, transfer, possession, and use was in or affected interstate and foreign commerce, including the transfer of a document by electronic means, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, 10 Sections 1028(a)(1), (b)(1)(A)(ii), (c)(3)(A) & (f)," Flores said.

The indictment against Deleon Guerrero comes after the recent raid the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted on the bureau.

Back in December 2022, FBI agents raided BMV and the CNMI Department of Public Safety's central office. FBI agents showed up unannounced at BMV and DPS central office in Susupe last Dec. 17, 2022, to carry out a search warrant issued for bo

MVA

From Page 1

national interests, which includes pivoting from the CNMI's dependence on its Chinese tourism market.

In a statement from acting MVA chair Gloria Cavanagh, she said that, although the China market is the fastest and easiest way for the CNMI to recover economically, MVA supports the administration's decision and is up to the challenge of reviving the CNMI tourism industry without the China market.

"MVA understands the importance of the China market. It would be the fastest and easiest path toward recovery, especially with our on-island partners. In the recent past, this market has been No. 1 or 2 in any given year. We hope that the geopolitical tensions will subside sooner than later but until then, we will support the administration's directive to strengthen our Japan and Korea markets (our political allies) and to seek opportunities in other markets. It will take time and research, but we are up to the task," she said.

Cavanagh added that the people of the CNMI, as Americans, must also consider the nation's security.

"We are Americans. As such, we must take into account the security and sovereignty of our nation," she said.

Palacios stated in his letter last

week that his administration is committed to advancing U.S. national interests in the Pacific region and will do what he can to advance these interests as geopolitical tensions continue to heighten.

"Part of this commitment includes the CNMI's pivot away from its reliance on the Chinese tourism market, which comprised more than 50% of our tourism base (about 200,000 visitors pre-pandemic)," he said.

In place of the Chinese market, Palacios says his administration is working on strengthening and further developing the tourism pipelines from American allies like Japan and South Korea.

"This will take time. The loss of the Chinese market has had considerably adverse economic and financial impact on the Commonwealth. This loss, which represents a sizable portion of our tourism revenue, contributes to vulnerable economic conditions that in the past have been exploited by the Chinese Communist Party to the detriment of the United States' interest in the region," said Palacios.

Because of the anticipated loss in revenue, Palacios is seeking the Indo-Pacific Command's help in advocating for additional support in the form of funding to stabilize the CNMI community as it commits to turning away from one of its biggest tourism markets.

ASIANA

From Page 1

mand during the summer, the flights will be operated daily from July 1 to Aug 27.

"The Incheon-Saipan route has been in operation for more than 30 years since its launch in May 1992, and even during the pandemic, the Asiana airlines continued its efforts to connect passengers through the travel bubble agreement," said Asiana through a representative. "As the only full-service carrier on the route, Asiana Airlines will strengthen our competitiveness by providing differentiated services from low-cost carriers and cooperating with related organizations, including the Marianas Visitors Authority."

The announcement was warmly welcomed by the MVA, as Korea was one of the top source markets for the Marianas prior to the pandemic.

"Asiana Airlines has been one of our key partners in reopening the

Korea market in the midst of COVID and bringing us to the level of tourism recovery we have today," said MVA acting managing director Judy C. Torres. "We are very grateful for their continued commitment to the Marianas as a full-service airline, as they serve many business travelers and add greater credibility to our destination with their partnership. Their return helps solidify the Korea market as we continue the work of increasing visitor arrivals, in total."

Visitors arrivals from South Korea for the month were the highest since before the pandemic, reaching about 12,000 arrivals compared to 2,821 in February last year. By the end of fiscal year 2023 in September, the number of available air seats from Korea is projected to be restored to 80% of the number available before the pandemic.

Overall, visitor arrivals to the Marianas are 55% lower year-to-date compared to fiscal year 2019 before the pandemic. (PR)

CPA to seek subsidy from US DOT for operational needs

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports

Authority will be asking the U.S. Department of Transportation this week for supplemental assistance so it

could continue operating.

During a CPA general board meeting last Thursday, CPA addressed its plans to submit

a letter for assistance to the US DOT, with the letter intended to address CPA's need for supplemental assistance for operations this coming fiscal year, according to CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds.

"Right now, we are way below our revenue collection to be able to be self-sustainable for the next fiscal year. Given the current levels of arrival, and the new policy that the government has issued...not to support the reopening of the China market, we're going to have to fill that hole from somewhere," she said.

King-Hinds said it's imperative that CPA find an alternate source of funding to ensure that the cost to land in the CNMI does not deter other airline partners from doing business in the CNMI.

"CPA does not take a position in regards to which markets [we have] but our job is to be able to run the ports for the airlines to land. So, in the absence of the China market, there needs to be an alternative answer and until such time that we find an answer, we need assistance because we cannot grow the Japan or Korea market if we're still at the current

level and we're not getting additional subsidy. It would make the cost of landing here cost-prohibitive. That's the gist of the letter, basically to ask for supplemental assistance with regards to the operations under the current authority," she said.

King-Hinds stated that it would take roughly \$9 million for CPA to carry on it operations at its current rates, so that is the amount they are seeking.

"This year, about \$9 million is what's supporting our operations and that is what remains of our [American Rescue Plan Act] funds so what we're hoping for is the same amount for next fiscal year. That would be ideal and that would allow us to pass on the savings to our partners," she said.

During a previous Senate session, CPA stated that, faced with a significantly decreased revenue and its ARPA funds nearly depleted, the most viable option so it could survive would be to impose higher rates, which could lead to a loss in the number of the CNMI's airline partners.

CPA fears that, if no subsidy can be provided for CPA to continue operations,

it may have to soon increase its airport rates just to get by, possibly risking the loss of airline partners.

Grass fire erupts on Mt. Tapochao

A grass fire engulfed a section of Mt. Tapochao over the weekend. The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services has yet to determine the cause of the fire.

According to DFEMS, a female caller reported last March 18, at approximately 2pm, that there is a possible grass fire on Mt. Tapochao due to thick black smoke in the area.

DFEMS sent several teams to the area soon after and DFEMS captain J. Laniyo reported that the brush fire was fully contained at 3:17pm.

Investigators from the Division of Fire Prevention and Arson Investigation arrived at the scene soon after the fire was contained to do their investigation.

As of press time, assessment of the cause of the fire and how much acreage was burned has yet to be determined. Information will be put out at a later date and time, said DFEMS. (Kimberly B. Esmores)

Free classical concert features Roman Rudnytsky

World-renowned classical pianist Roman Rudnytsky, who has entertained the CNMI and worked with its students almost annually until the COVID-19 pandemic hit, is back, and performed in a concert last Saturday, March 18, and will do so again on March 25.

This Saturday's concert will be held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Saipan Multi-Purpose Center at 6pm. He will be joined at the intermission by the MHS Glee Club, Rhythm and Harmony.

There is no entrance fee for the concerts. Contributions will be accepted and appreciated.

According to background information provided by the Friends of the Arts, Rudnytsky is an internationally active concert pianist of Ukrainian

background whose frequent performances take him all over the world—to every continent and places in-between. In addition to performances in capital cities and important musical centers, he often plays in places away from the musical mainstream, bringing the world and pleasure of classical music to audiences which seldom experience this type of music in live performance. He has received much acclaim in the world's press and many repeat invitations.

A graduate of the famous Juilliard School in New York, he also did additional studies at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland and in master classes in Austria (the "Mozarteum") and Italy. Since

1972, Rudnytsky has been a member of the piano faculty of the Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio. He is a recipient of that institution's "Distinguished Professor Award" in recognition of his concert activities. He previously served on the piano faculties of the Indiana University School of Music (Bloomington, Indiana) and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory, in addition to being "artist-in-residence" at two Australian universities.

This is Rudnytsky's twelfth trip to the CNMI. The Friends of the Arts, with the help of sponsors from the Community, have hosted Rudnytsky's stay. (PR)

MTEC, MVA work to turn students' attention to tourism



MTEC

Marianas Tourism Education Council board chair Vicky Benavente, seated second left, leads an educational outreach to the MY WAVE — Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically — Club of Oleai Elementary on March 6, 2023, on Saipan. Standing are MY WAVE Club members and seated left to right are MY WAVE Club adviser Mildred Kintol, Benavente, MY WAVE club adviser Mayuko Arriola, and MTEC board member Catherine Perry. Not pictured are club advisers Don Felix Taisacan and Jake Reyes

The Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority have visited three elementary schools this month to direct students' attention to the tourism industry.

The outreach team met with MY WAVE Club members of Oleai Elementary on March 6, fifth graders at San Vicente Elementary on March 7, and about 150 fourth and fifth graders of Kagman Elementary on March 8 to teach students about the Marianas' primary economic driver, how it impacts their lives, and ways students can support tourism even at a young age.

MY WAVE stands for Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically.

Using "tourism turner" giveaways, known commonly as fidget spinners, the team invited students to respond with a spin to questions about Marianas tourism, beach cleanups and other activities students have participated in, those

who have family members working in various sectors of the industry, and more.

The outreach was conducted by MTEC acting chair Vicky Benavente, MTEC board member Catherine Perry, and MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda.

"The MTEC understands that it's been tough for a couple of years for these students. By using these fun 'tourism turners,' we hope to keep them focused on the positive aspects of our islands' number one industry," said Benavente.

Members of the MY WAVE Club at Oleai Elementary also shared the results of one of their recent activities, turtle paintings that they hope to have displayed at a local hotel or other business that visitors frequent.

MTEC and the MVA aim to visit all public schools this school year with the message, "Tourism is Everybody's Business." The MTEC presentation includes information

on the number visitor arrivals, source markets, travel motivations, the benefits of tourism, careers in travel and tourism, and ideas on how students can engage with tourism. The MVA presentation covers the mandate of the office and the work of its divisions, especially marketing and community projects.

Other MTEC board members are Martin Duenas (MVA), Dr. Galvin Guerrero (Northern Marianas College), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (CNMI Public School System), Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort Saipan), and Gordon Marciano (PDI). Dr. Yunzi Zhang of Northern Marianas College School of Business also volunteers with the council.

Any business interested in showcasing the Oleai Elementary School turtle paintings may contact MY WAVE Club adviser Don Felix Taisacan at donfelix.taisacan@cnmipss.org. (MTEC)



NMPASI

NORTHERN MARIANAS PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS, INC.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

POSITION: PROGRAM AIDE
PAY-LEVEL: P.L. 22 / STEP 1-10
REPORTS TO: PROGRAM COORDINATOR

GENERAL JOB DESCRIPTION:

This is a non-exempt position responsible for the day-to-day administrative functions of the office and its programs. The Program Aide reports to the Program Coordinator and works within prescribed NMPASI standards, policies and procedures.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- ✓ At least a High School Diploma or its equivalence including a GED and other similar certificates;
- ✓ Must be proficient in computer usage including but not limited to word processing and spreadsheet applications;
- ✓ Must possess a valid CNMI driver's license; and
- ✓ Must be able to operate various office equipment including but not limited to telephones, faxes, and copier machines.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested applicants may pick up a complete job description and application forms at the NMPASI office located on middle road approximately 100 yards north of the Gualo Rai traffic light intersection. Completed application packets must be submitted to the NMPASI Executive Director at the NMPASI Office. In order for applications to be considered they must include **(1) a Cover Letter, (2) a Resumé, (3) Completed Application forms.** Incomplete applications and/or applications which do not demonstrate that the applicant meets minimum qualifications as listed above or do not meet the deadline for submittal will not be considered. For further information, please feel free to contact Mr. Gregory Borja at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] / (670) 287-0652 [message] or email at gborja@nmpasi.org. NMPASI is an EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

Deadline to submit applications will be on March 31, 2023 at 4pm



Scenes from McDonald's of Saipan 30th anniversary celebration last Saturday at the restaurant's main branch in Chalan Lau Lau.

McDonald's of Saipan shindig celebrates 30 years

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

McDonald's of Saipan officials, employees, staff, and members of the community gathered for several family friendly activities last Saturday afternoon at the restaurant's main branch in Chalan Lau Lau to celebrate McDonald's 30th anniversary in the CNMI.

The celebration officially kicked off at 2pm with games and giveaway prizes, including free orders of fries. By 4:30pm, families and customers gathered to watch a live set of performances, including a performance from cultural dance group Te Ivi Maori.

The restaurant itself was packed as special deals on select food, including some free smoothie samples, were made available from 2pm until 8pm, and as several schools participated in the live show, many families came to watch their children perform dances and songs with their schoolmates.

"We're so happy that the community has come out to support your locally owned McDonald's of Saipan and we want to show that we're here for the community, so we put on this big event. ...We're happy to be here. Thank you, Saipan," said McDonald's of Saipan and Guam vice president Joe Ayuyu Jr.

Ayuyu said he looks forward to another 30-plus years of McDonald's on Saipan.

After a major renovation that introduced a modern look and feature at the restaurant's main branch in

Chalan Lau Lau, Ayuyu said, "We want to focus on that and bring a futuristic experience to the people of the CNMI. That's our goal."

He also expressed his deepest thanks to every person, business, stakeholder, and the overall community for their contribution in making McDonald's a success. He also made sure to thank all employees and staff. "... I want to thank our employees. Some have chosen to make a career of working at McDonald's, and they've been with us for so many, many years and so I want to thank them for their hard work and dedication. I want to especially thank the community. And, as what my parents like to always remind me and my sisters, the community is what makes us successful, so we always [have] to give back and remember the community."

"Today is a celebration for McDonald's and also a celebration for the people of the CNMI so thank you everybody," added Ayuyu.

Throughout the day individuals and families could be seen either sharing or making more McDonald's memories.

Sisters Christine and Paulen Beceril from Chalan Kanoa shared that McDonald's is one of the places that hold fond childhood memories for them when they were growing up. They especially noted their birthdays at the restaurant, calling it a "fun part of childhood."

McDonald's crew members Leslie Babauta and Eros Estolas are excited and happy to be a part of the celebration.

"Being here it's all about family," they said, adding "...I'm very excited, this is my first time. You know, I've been working here for only six months, so being able to be a part of the 30th year anniversary seems awesome."

McDonald's marketing assistant Jewel Cubangbang said event planning for the celebration actually begun directly after last year's golf tournament, and took about three months.

Cubangbang said it had been such a great experience, especially since this event was her first time to plan one since joining the team just nine months ago.

It was also announced last Saturday that the deadline for the McDonald's Race to Raise program for Public School System schools has been extended. The program is designed to give the restaurant's patrons the opportunity to give a ticket to the school of their choice after purchasing a minimum of \$15 at McDonald's. Whichever school raises the most tickets will be awarded \$5,000.

"It's really all about the children and giving back to the community," Ayuyu said. "McDonald's is a family business. It's really into children and the youth, so this is a program in which we want to give back. You know, everyone loves the children, the children love McDonald's, and we want to keep that cycle going. Working hand-in-hand and partnership with the local schools, that's something we're very happy to do, so thank you."


Carol Lee is named to the Dean's List at Georgia Tech

ATLANTA, Georgia—Renowned local tennis star Carol Lee has made it to the Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester at the Georgia Institute of Technology. This designation is awarded to undergraduate students who have earned a 3.0 or higher academic average for the semester.

The Georgia Institute of Technology, or Georgia Tech, is one of the top public research universities in the U.S., developing leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition. For more information, visit gatech.edu. (PR)



Lee



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on August 27, 2021, Farah Jane Reyes, an immediate family member of Remedio S. Reyes, NMHC employee, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant- Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.


Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low-income persons intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Mrs. Remedio S. Reyes is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this loan application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before Tuesday, March 21, 2023.

Dated this 7th of March, 2023.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that Nicolas Pinaula, an employee of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation- CDBG-DR Program, intends to apply for scholarship assistance under the Workforce Development Program (WDP), a recipient of CDBG-DR funds.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low-moderate income students intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Mr. Pinaula is not and shall not be involved in the handling of the scholarship application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before March 21, 2023.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2023.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

ROBERTO P. ROSAL JR.
Petitioner,
vs.
MARY JOY T. ROSAL
Respondent.

FCD-DI
CIVIL ACTION
NO. 23-0068
**SUMMONS FOR
PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on the file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 504974 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 17th day of February, 2023.

/s/
CLERK OF COURT

Search suspended for missing spearfisher near Blue Hole, Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—Responders suspended the active search for a missing 31-year-old male spearfisher off Blue Hole on the west side of Guam on March 19, 2023, at 6:32pm.

The spearfisher remains missing.

Involved in the search were the Guam Fire Department, Guam Police Department, U.S. Navy Security Forces, U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Com-

bat Squadron 25, U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Five, U.S. Coast Guard cutter Myrtle Hazard, U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter, and U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam Joint Rescue Sub-Center.

"We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and

friends of the missing man. Working closely with our partners, we conducted 24 searches over 70 hours, covering over 1,302 square nautical miles," said Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Crose, the FM/SG search and rescue mission coordinator for the case. "It's never an easy decision to suspend search efforts, and the loss saddens us."

At around 6pm on March 16, Guam Fire Department

personnel received word of a missing spearfisher near Blue Hole. Watchstanders at FM/SG JRSC received notification shortly after. The missing spearfisher was reportedly part of a group of seven aboard a vessel on an excursion to spearfish near Orote Point.

Watchstanders immediately coordinated with Guam Fire Department personnel, and HSC-25 diverted two he-

licopters from a nearby training mission. JRSC diverted USCGC Myrtle Hazard from their offshore patrol and directed the launch of two 29-foot Response Boat-Small crews from Station Apra Harbor. U.S. Navy Security Forces also took action to search the shoreline and Apra Harbor. A joint incident command post was established on the beach nearby. The team

also issued an urgent marine information broadcast notice to mariners advising anyone in the area to keep a sharp lookout and report any sightings to responders.

While the active search is suspended, anyone with any information should call the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam Joint Rescue Sub-Center at +1 671-355-4824. (USCG)

Academy, St. John's take first place in UOG's chemistry competition



"Best Laboratory Skill" award winners of the 2023 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 2 at the University of Guam. (From left) Arlett Mikayla Fojas, Academy of Our Lady of Guam; Thomas Benzon, Father Dueñas Memorial School; and Ashling Wade-Dickins, Notre Dame High School.

High school students from St. John's School and the Academy of Our Lady of Guam took the first-place trophies at the 14th annual University of Guam Chemistry Titration Competition that was held during UOG's Charter Day on March 2. This year's competition hosted the largest number of competitors to date, with 36 students from nine high schools.

Hosted by the chemistry faculty under the UOG College of Natural & Applied Sciences and with chemistry majors serving as the judges, the

two-part competition tests students' lab skills and precision in determining the concentration of a base and the mass of an acid through titration, or volume measurement.

"I enjoy titrating and working with my team," said Kai-Li Updegrove, a 12th grade St. John's student who took first in both the individual and team competitions. "Math isn't my strongest subject, but the competition helped me improve my math skills when we completed the calculations."

Former competition participants have gone on to

study chemistry at UOG and then to obtain advanced degrees. Karen Bacalia, a winner of the 2016 competition while attending Academy of Our Lady, went on to earn dual bachelor's degrees in chemistry and agriculture from UOG in 2021 and is now working on a doctorate in nutritional sciences at Rutgers University - New Brunswick in New Jersey. Allen Marc Soriano, a student from Father Dueñas Memorial School who won in 2009, earned a biology degree from UOG and is now a



Everett Singleton of Father Dueñas Memorial School measures a solution with his teammate, Bernard Malicsi, during the 2023 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 2 at the University of Guam. The pair won third place for "Best Team."



"Best Individual" award winners of the 2023 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 2 at the University of Guam. (From left) Kai-Li Updegrove, St. John's School; Joseph Ordenez, Okkodo High School; and Alfred Morales, St. John's School.



"Best Team" award winners of the 2023 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 2 at the University of Guam. (From left) Kai-Li Updegrove and Liam Padua, St. John's School; Seohee Min and Alfred Joshua Morales, St. John's School; and Bernard Malicsi and Everett Singleton, Father Dueñas Memorial School.

licensed pharmacist at Guam Regional Medical City.

The dean of the college, Dr. Lee Yudin, encouraged the participants to consider continuing their interest in science at UOG.

"We have a wonderful dual degree program in chemistry and biology, and we have many graduates who go on to medical school," he said. "You have greater advantage getting into top-notch medical schools in the mainland coming from a small institution and being a Pacific Islander."

The winners of the competition were:

Best Individual

■ 1st place: Kai-Li Updegrove, St. John's School

■ 2nd place: Joseph Rion Ordenez, Okkodo High School

■ 3rd place: Alfred Joshua Morales, St. John's School

Best Team

■ 1st place: Kai-Li Updegrove and Liam Padua, St. John's School

■ 2nd place: Seohee Min and Alfred Joshua Morales, St. John's School

■ 3rd place: Everett Singleton and Bernard Malicsi, Father

Dueñas Memorial School

Best Laboratory Skill

■ 1st place: Arlett Mikayla Fojas, Academy of Our Lady of Guam

■ 2nd place: Thomas Benzon, Father Dueñas Memorial School

■ 3rd place: Ashling Wade-Dickins, Notre Dame High School

The other participating high schools were John F. Kennedy High School, George Washington High School, Tiyan High School, and Harvest Christian Academy. (UOG)

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The ghosts of 2007. Why learn from history when repeating it is so much fun?

Back in 2017, when Congress and the Trump administration were pushing a bill to weaken hard-fought banking regulations, we warned that they were playing with fire. Barely a decade had passed since the 2007-2008 economic meltdown. Blatant abuses in the financial industry had more than merited the tough banking regulations that followed. Yet, now, Congress and the Trump administration wanted to weaken regulations to placate the banking lobby. One of the key players doing the banks' bidding was Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Ballwin, who held (and still holds) a key seat on the House Financial Services Committee.

To recap how the meltdown happened: Reckless risk-taking by mortgage lenders had brought major financial institutions to the brink of collapse. The stock market tanked. Millions of Americans lost their homes, their jobs, their retirement accounts, or all three. Banks hated the tighter regulations imposed by the 2010 Dodd-Frank banking reform act and unleashed their most powerful forces—gobs and gobs of money—to lobby for a rollback.

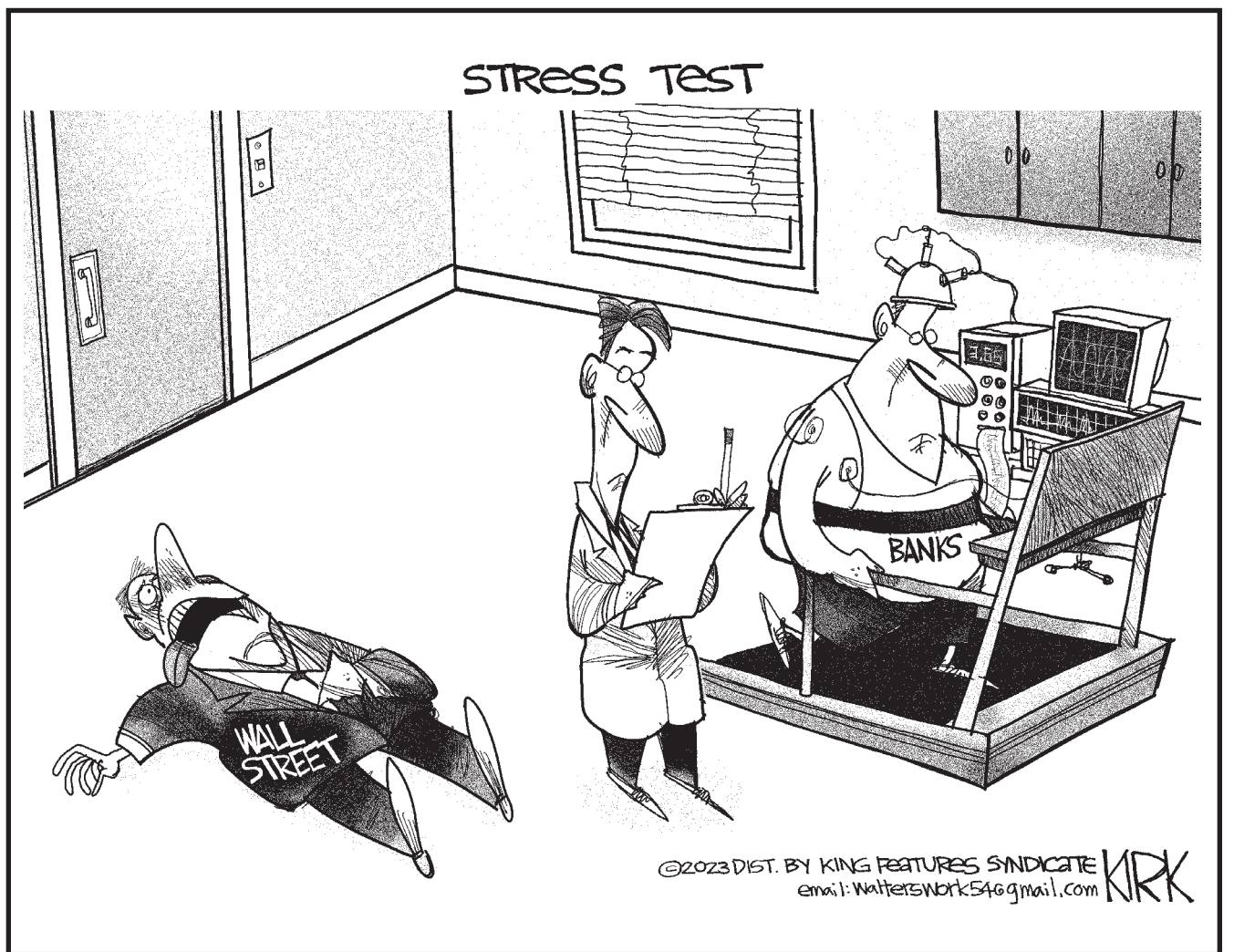
Money talked. With billionaire Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin leading the charge on behalf of oppressed billionaire bankers, Congress agreed to dramatically loosen regulation thresholds so that smaller banks—those with less than \$250 billion in assets—could take bigger risks again. Billionaire President Donald Trump signed the bill. Billionaire bankers cheered. Wagner's campaign fund swelled. Also swept up in the fervor was former Rep. Barney Frank, D-Massachusetts, who found reason to push for reversal of his own banking restrictions. Why? Perhaps because he now held a lucrative board position at one of those smaller institutions: Signature Bank.

Last weekend, Signature Bank and Silicon Valley Bank became two of the three largest bank failures in U.S. history. Fears of a broader banking failure have sent U.S. stock markets plummeting again, while the Federal Reserve is scrambling to head off a depositor panic. Tech firms whose Silicon Valley Bank deposits exceeded the federal insurance coverage limits worried that they wouldn't be able to make payroll unless the government stepped in.

The two banks failed for different reasons, but both were rooted in the 2018 legislation that had allowed them to escape the federal stress-test regulations that had previously applied to them. They had placed too many of their assets in liquidity-risky holdings that tighter federal regulation would likely have caught. Silicon Valley had placed more than half of its assets in low-yield, low-liquidity U.S. Treasury bonds, and Signature Bank had put far too much reliance on cryptocurrency transactions.

The relaxed regulations provided Wagner and other Republicans with a short-term political victory that oddly played well with Trump's base of working-class non-billionaires. Frank reportedly walked away with \$2.4 million in compensation from Signature. But Americans this week once again are watching their 401(k)'s sink in value while wondering: Is this 2007 all over again?

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AI is about to transform childhood. Are we ready?

With the introduction of GPT-4 and Claude, AI has taken another big step forward. GPT-4 is human-level or better at many hard tasks, a huge improvement over GPT-3.5, which was released only a few months ago. Yet amid the debate over these advances, there has been very little discussion of one of the most profound effects of AI large language models: how they will reshape childhood.

In the future, every middle-class kid will grow up with a personalized AI assistant—so long as the parents are OK with that.

As for the children, most of them will be willing if not downright eager. When I was 4 years old, I had an imaginary friend who lived under the refrigerator, called (ironically) Bing Bing. I would talk to him and report his opinions to my parents and sister.

In the near future, such friends will be quite real, albeit automated, and they will talk back to our children as directly as we wish. Having an AI service for your child will be as normal as having a pet, except the AI service will never bite. It will be carried around in something like a tablet, though with a design that is oriented toward the AI.

Recent developments suggest that AI models can be both commoditized and customized more easily and cheaply than expected. So parents will be able to choose what kind of companion they want their kids to have—in contrast to the free-for-all of the internet. The available services likely will include education and tutoring, text or vocalizations of what the family pet might be thinking, dancing cartoon avatars, and much more. Companies will compete to offer products that parents think will be good for their kids. Some of the AIs might even read bedtime stories (in fact, I've already heard some of them).

Many parents may be reluctant to let their kids become attached to an AI. But I predict that most families will welcome it. For one, parents will be able to turn off the connection whenever they wish. Simply clicking a button is easier than yanking an iPad out of a kid's grasp.

Most of all, letting your kid have an AI companion will bring big advantages. Your child will learn to read and write much faster and better, and will do better in school. Or maybe you want your kid to master Spanish or Chinese, but you can't afford an expensive tutor who comes only twice a week. Do you want your child to learn how to read music? The AI services will be as limited or as expansive as you want them to be.

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. He is coauthor of *Talent: How to Identify Energizers, Creatives, and Winners Around the World*.



It is an open question how quickly schools will embrace these new methods of learning. At some point, however, they will become part of the curriculum. Competitive pressures will make parents reluctant to withhold AI from their kids. Even if the AIs are not present in the classroom, some kids will use them to help do their homework, gaining a big advantage, and the practice will likely spread.

Of course children will use these AIs for purposes far beyond what their parents intend. They will become playthings, companions, entertainers and much more. When I was a kid, with no internet and mediocre TV, I created imaginary worlds in the dirt, or with simple household items, and my parents often had no clue. The AI services will become part of this model of spontaneous play, even if parents try to make them purely educational.

What about teenagers? Well, many parents may allow their kids to speak with AI therapists. It might be better than nothing, and perhaps better than many human therapists.

It is easy enough to imagine the problems. Socially conservative parents won't be able to stop their kids from visiting friends whose AIs teach about sex education. Many kids may manage to "jailbreak" their AIs, getting them talking about sex and violence, even in an educational context (try Roman history). And while the rise of AI won't necessarily increase inequality, it's hard to argue that it won't confer even more advantages on wealthy and middle-class kids.

But the biggest drawback might simply be that the AI services work too well, and kids become very attached to them, neglecting friends and family. They might be such good babysitters that parents won't always pull the plug when they should. They might, in short, be the 21st century version of television.

What will it be like to grow up with such companions? Nobody really knows. But an entire generation is about to find out.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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What's with all the 'pantry porn' on Instagram and TikTok?

By JENNA DRENTEN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Neatly aligned glass spice jars tagged with printed white labels. Wicker baskets filled with packages of pasta, crackers and snacks. Rows of flavored seltzer water stacked in double-decker plastic bins.

In today's consumer culture, "a place for everything and everything in its place" isn't just a mantra; it's big business. As someone who studies digital consumer culture, I've noticed an uptick in glamorized, stylized and fully stocked pantries on TikTok and Instagram, giving rise to a content genre I dub "pantry porn." These online shrines say a lot about our cultural moment—simultaneously raising awareness of the unpaid and long-unseen labor that makes households work and also creating new unrealistic expectations that perpetuate classist, racist and sexist divisions.

The pantry—derived from the Latin word for bread, "panis"—was originally a hidden space for storing food. It was purely functional, not a place to show off to others. As open floor plans became popular in the U.S. in the 1950s, kitchens emerged into plain view, setting the stage for sweeping floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall cabinetry. Now meticulously arranged pantries appeal to middle-class sensibilities: Maybe you can't have a designer kitchen. But you can beautify your bulk food storage.

In the last decade, an entire cottage industry of blogs, books and television shows has introduced people to terms like "de-cluttering," "minimalism" and "simple living."

Minimalism once represented a countercultural life-style rooted in anti-consumption: use less, buy less, have less. But if pantry porn is any indication, the new minimalism means "more is more" as long as the "more" is not messy.

Storing spices in coordinated glass jars and color coordinating dozens of sprinkles containers may seem trivial. But tidiness is tangled up with status, and messiness is loaded with assumptions about personal responsibility and respectability. Cleanliness has historically been used as a cultural gatekeeping mechanism to reinforce status distinctions based on a vague understanding of "niceness": nice people, with nice yards, in nice houses, make for nice neighborhoods.

What lies beneath the surface of this anti-messiness, pro-niceness stance is a history of classist, racist and sexist social structures. In my research, influencers who produce pantry porn are predominantly white women who demonstrate what it looks like to maintain a "nice" home by creating a new status symbol: the perfectly organized, fully stocked pantry.

Perhaps it's not surprising that pantry porn found its foothold during the COVID-19 pandemic, when shortages in the supply chain surged. Keeping stuff on hand became a symbol of resilience for those with the money and space to do so. This allure of strategic stockpiling is evident in other collector subcultures like doomsday preppers and extreme couponers.

The work required to restock, refill and reset the kitchen is a central element in producing everyday pantry porn. This work often falls to women in the household. One TikTok mom goes on a "snack strike," stating she will not restock the pantry until her children and husband eat what is already on hand.

Magazines like *Good Housekeeping* were once the brokers of idealized domestic work. Now online pantry porn sets the aspirational standard for becoming an ideal mom, ideal wife and ideal woman. This grew out of a shift toward an intensive mothering ideology that equates being a good mom with time-intensive, labor-intensive, financially expensive care work.

Sure, all of those baskets and bins serve a functional purpose in the home: seeing what you need, when you need it. But the social pressure to curate a perfect pantry might make some women work overtime. They can't just shove store-bought boxes of snacks into a cupboard; they must neatly place the grab-and-go snacks into a fully stocked pantry that rivals a boutique corner store.

Pantry porn, as a status symbol, relies on the promise of making daily domestic work easier. But if women are largely responsible for the work required to maintain the perfectly organized pantry, it's critical to ask: Easier for whom?

Jenna Drenten is an associate professor of marketing at Loyola University Chicago.

What is a reasonable approach to masking right now?

By CORY FRANKLIN and ROBERT WEINSTEIN
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

In medicine as elsewhere in life, if you ask the wrong question, you're likely to get the wrong answer. So if the question is, "Do masks worn outside medical settings work to protect against COVID-19 and respiratory diseases?"—or its politically charged companion, "Do you believe in masks?"—don't be surprised if the answers you receive are simplistic or wrong.

A perfect example was the recent publication of an analysis by the respected Cochrane Library, an organization that collates and reports the results of scientific studies. It examined a series of randomized controlled trials published in the scientific literature that asked whether surgical masks, N95 masks or P2 respirators prevented the transmission of respiratory viruses. The overarching consensus was that wearing a mask in ordinary public places "probably makes little or no difference" in an individual's risk of acquiring influenza or COVID-19.

The response by the news media and scientific community was predictable. Masking skeptics pounced, interpreting this to mean that masks are worthless, thus ignoring the words "probably" and "little or no difference" that leave open the possibility of benefit at the margins or in high-risk settings, which can exert a dramatic effect in a large population. Meanwhile, masking defenders mounted a vigorous takedown of the report and an impassioned defense of masks as essential.

There are limitations to the Cochrane report, but it cannot be dismissed. It suggests that studies promoted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization early in the pandemic that cited high degrees of mask effectiveness were overstated. According to one study, the chances of acquiring COVID-19 were reduced by nearly 80% by wearing a mask. An effect this significant could have shown up—but didn't—in the Cochrane compendium.

This is not proof that masks are not effective, but it does strengthen the argument that the effect of masks is limited. (The young person you may have seen biking alone along the lake wearing a mask but no helmet doesn't understand the concept of relative risk.)

That's why the question asked in the studies is so important. If the question asked is not whether masks work but whether they have a role in selected situations, the Cochrane report comes up short. The report concentrated on randomized controlled trials, in which subjects are divided by chance (to eliminate selection bias) into separate groups to study whether a drug or an intervention like

What is a reasonable approach to masking right now? ...Much depends on community levels of COVID-19. When levels are high, there are more situations...in which masking is prudent. When levels are moderate to low...masks are irrelevant in most settings.

masking really works. The randomized controlled trial, or RCT, is touted as the gold standard of experimental design, but one of the things we have learned from the pandemic is that this is not always true.

"Over the last 30 years or so, I have begun to realize that while RCTs are a brilliant idea for testing drugs, they are a catastrophically bad idea for testing certain other things, masks being one of them. There are a lot of philosophical reasons, but there are also common-sense reasons," Dr. Trisha Greenhalgh, a respected British professor at the University of Oxford who studies mask effect, explained in a 2022 *Medscape* interview.

"The RCT is an artificial thing. You randomize people to A or B, and you have to keep everything controlled. The thing about masking in a community in the real world

is you cannot control everything. In fact, you can control very little. If I ask you to give your consent to wear a mask and then get tested for COVID-19, that's great because you have given informed consent. But what about everybody else in the community?" Greenhalgh asked.

Given these limitations, what is a reasonable approach to masking right now? As the director of the CDC, Dr. Rochelle Walensky has stated much depends on community levels of COVID-19. When levels are high, there are more situations, such as long stints in crowded indoor venues with poor ventilation, in which masking is prudent. When levels are moderate to low, as they are now, masks are irrelevant in most settings.

The greatest benefit to masking remains in health care settings in areas with immunocompromised patients—for example, organ transplant areas and chemotherapy wards. There is historical evidence that masks, especially N95 masks, have prevented infections in these areas. When community levels are low, policies for routine masking in other hospital areas are best left to individual institutions. (Virus transmission may still occur outside patient rooms.)

In schools, we believe masks should be optional for teachers and students, especially at current community levels. COVID-19 transmission by children is low, but not zero, and many countries no longer require masking in school. We believe masking does harm language and social development in younger students—another situation in which studies have not answered the questioned conclusively. Masking may be recommended for students and teachers who are immunocompromised.

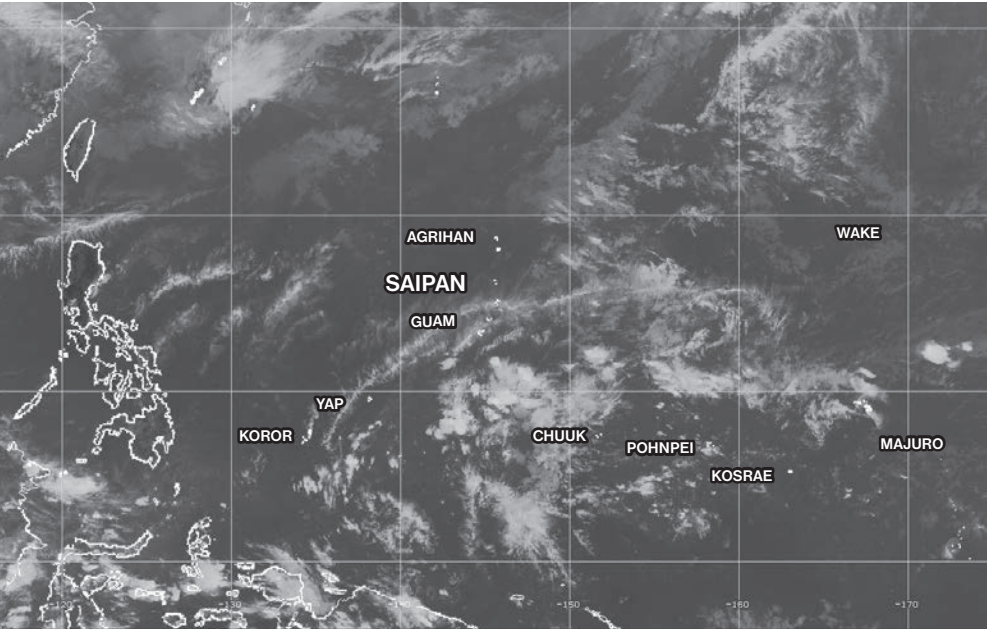
In his 1982 classic book "Medical Thinking," the eminent medical historian Dr. Lester King described scientific evolution in medicine over centuries. He asked a fundamental question, "Do we recognize the enormous gulf between 'This is true' and 'This is true only under limited circumstances'?"

That question is central to understanding the complex role of masks in respiratory disease.

Dr. Cory Franklin is a retired intensive care physician. Dr. Robert Weinstein is an infectious disease specialist at Rush University Medical Center.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Scattered showers. Partly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
82°	75°	83°	75°	85°	74°	86°	74°	86°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:25 AM, MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The latest altimetry and buoy data shows seas running near 6 feet, with visible satellite imagery showing increasing cloud cover and showers starting to develop south and east of Guam and Rota, with a few lightning strikes detected south of Guam`s coastal waters as well.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	84° / 76°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 77°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 75°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 76°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	83° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:20 AM	6:27 PM
Wednesday	6:22 AM	6:28 PM
Thursday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM
Saturday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:55 AM	6:04 PM	-
Wednesday	6:37 AM	7:01 PM	-
Thursday	7:18 AM	7:57 PM	-
Friday	7:59 AM	8:53 PM	-
Saturday	8:41 AM	9:49 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Thundershowers	71° / 58°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	71° / 50°	
Hong Kong	Cloudy	77° / 72°	
Honolulu	Showers/Wind	82° / 72°	
London	Light Rain	58° / 50°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	77° / 50°	
Manila	Sunny	93° / 74°	
Melbourne	Rain	71° / 59°	
Miami	Cloudy	73° / 63°	
New York	Sunny	53° / 36°	
Osaka	Showers	64° / 53°	
Paris	Cloudy	60° / 48°	
Busan	Showers	64° / 56°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	67° / 47°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	57° / 34°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	55° / 46°	
Seoul	Sunny	68° / 43°	
Tokyo	Showers	65° / 53°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	54° / 31°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:17 AM	High Tide	0.21	
7:48 AM	Low Tide	1.95	
1:47 PM	High Tide	0.63	
7:21 PM	Low Tide	2.00	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T`Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7	10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7	8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7
3:00 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	6,7	4:00 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7	12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7
5:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6,7	6:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	6,7
ROTA TO GUAM			GUAM TO ROTA		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun				
				3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Chamber wants in-person interview for CW-1 visa waived

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce wants CNMI-Only Transitional Worker visa included in the list of eligible non-immigrant visas that qualify for a waiver of in-person interviews in their country of nationality or residence.

In a letter dated Feb. 15, 2023 to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP), Chamber president Joe C. Guerrero is seeking the CNMI's non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives' help in convincing the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Homeland Security to waive in-person interviews to CW-1 visa applicants.

"Including the CW-1 visa to the list of eligible visas for interview waiver will alleviate the historically backlogged schedule for in-person interviews. Problems arise when a CW-1 visa is approved by USCIS but then the only available in-person interview time slots are months later," he said.

The long duration between



MARK RABAGO

Workers of Hong Ye Construction work on the sewer line along Beach Road in front of Joeten Center Building 1 in Susupe.

the approval and the actual in-person interview becomes a

burden not only to the CW-1 visa applicant but to the

company that hired the foreign worker.

"As a result, by the time the worker is able to enter

the CNMI, several months of their one-year visa period has already elapsed. This problem is often compounded when a Temporary Labor Certification by the U.S. Department of Labor is issued months after the CW-1 application is filed," added the business group's president.

Guerrero said that the Chamber looks forward to meeting with Sablan and or his staff to discuss the aforementioned request "and to explore ways to continue assisting CNMI businesses during these difficult times."

Last Dec. 23, the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Department of Homeland Security, announced that it has extended until Dec. 31, 2023, the previously approved authority allowing consular officers discretion to waive the in-person interview for certain visa applicants who meet certain conditions, including the application for a visa in their country of nationality or residence. Applicants renewing a visa in the same classification within 48 months of the prior visa's expiration are also eligible for an interview waiver.

California, drugmaker partner to produce affordable insulin

DOWNEY, Calif. (AP)—The state of California and a generic drug manufacturer announced a 10-year partnership Saturday to produce affordable, state-branded insulin that they hope will rival longtime producers and push down prices for a medication used by millions of Americans.

The product is not expected on store shelves until at least next year, and it was difficult to predict what effect it would have on a market already shaken by change. Earlier this week another major insulin maker promised steep price cuts as pressure builds on drugmakers and insurers to slash the cost of the drug.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said he hoped California's emergence as an insulin-maker would prompt prices to collapse. Research has shown that prices for the drug have more than tripled in the past couple of decades.

"We are intent to make this about market disruption," Newsom said at a ceremony announcing the pact at a pharmaceutical warehouse near Los Angeles. He called it "a game changer" for 8 million Americans who use insu-

lin to treat diabetes.

Many questions remain. The state and its partner, the nonprofit Civica, have yet to locate a California-based manufacturing facility. Regulatory approvals will be needed. Newsom said a 10-milliliter vial of the state-branded insulin would sell for \$30, but it's possible competitors could slash their prices and undercut the state product.

"Is this perfect? We don't know yet," Newsom acknowledged at one point.

Just days ago, President Joe Biden said his administration is focused "intensely" on lowering health care costs, including pressuring pharmaceutical companies to lower the costs of insulin. Legislation enacted last year capped copayments for insulin at \$35 per month for Medicare beneficiaries. Biden has proposed extending that cap to all Americans.

Novo Nordisk said Tuesday that it will slash some of its U.S. insulin prices up to 75% starting next year. The announcement comes less than two weeks after rival Eli Lilly said it will drop some of its prices by 70% or more later this year.

Russia, Ukraine extend grain deal to aid world's poor

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—An unprecedented wartime deal that allowed grain to flow from Ukraine to countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where hunger is a growing threat and high food prices are pushing more people into poverty was extended just before its expiration date, officials said Saturday.

The United Nations and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the extension, but neither confirmed how long it would last. The U.N., Turkey and Ukraine had pushed for 120 days, while Russia said it was willing to agree to 60 days.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov tweeted Saturday that the deal would remain in effect for the longer, four-month period. But Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Russian news agency Tass that Moscow "agreed to extend the deal for 60 days."

"Any claim that it's prolonged for more than 60 days is either wishful thinking or deliberate manipulation," Russia's deputy ambassador to the U.N., Dmitry Polyansky, said.

Ukraine and Russia are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food prod-

ucts that developing nations depend on. Two ships carrying more than 96,000 metric tons of corn left Ukrainian ports on Saturday bound for China and Tunisia, according to U.N. data.

This is the second renewal of the agreement that Ukraine and Russia signed with the United Nations and Turkey last July to allow food shipments from three Black Sea ports following a halt to shipping after Russia invaded its neighbor over a year ago on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russia has complained that a separate agreement with the United Nations to overcome obstacles to shipments of its fertilizers that was part of the July package has not produced results.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebeniza told the U.N. Security Council on Friday that the United Nations has to recognize it has "no leverage to exempt Russian agricultural export operations from Western sanctions," and therefore Russia would only extend the deal until May 18.

"If Brussels, Washington and London are genuinely interested to continue the export of food from Ukraine through the maritime humanitarian corridor, then they have two months to exempt from their sanctions

the entire chain of operations which accompany the Russian agricultural sector," Nebeniza said. "Otherwise, we fail to understand how the package concept of the secretary-general of the United Nations will work through these simple agreements."

The International Rescue Committee expressed disappointment Saturday that the deal is only for 60 days, stressing that countries in East Africa in particular will be entering the lean grain season at the time of its expiration in May, including Somalia which receives over 90% of its grain from Ukraine and is beset by unprecedented drought and on the verge of famine.

Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said in a statement that 25 million metric tonnes (about 28 millions tons) of grain and foodstuffs had moved to 45 countries under the initiative, helping to bring down global food prices and stabilizing markets.

"We remain strongly committed to both agreements, and we urge all sides to redouble their efforts to implement them fully," Dujarric said.

The war in Ukraine sent food prices surging to record highs last year and helped contribute

to a global food crisis also tied to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate factors like drought.

The disruption in shipments of grain needed for staples of diets in places like Egypt, Lebanon and Nigeria exacerbated economic challenges and helped push millions more people into poverty or food insecurity. People in developing countries spend more of their money on basics like food.

The crisis left an estimated 345 million people facing food insecurity, according to the U.N.'s World Food Program.

Food prices have fallen for 11 straight months. But food was already expensive before the war because of droughts from the Americas to the Middle East—most devastating in the Horn of Africa, with thousands dying in Somalia. Poorer nations that depend on imported food priced in dollars are spending more as their currencies weaken.

The agreements also faced setbacks since it was brokered by the U.N. and Turkey: Russia pulled out briefly in November before rejoining and extending the deal. In the past few months, inspections meant to ensure ships only carry grain and not weapons have slowed down significantly.

Nation

Trump's call for protests get muted reaction from supporters

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Donald Trump's calls for protests ahead of his anticipated indictment in New York have generated mostly muted reactions from supporters, with even some of his most ardent loyalists dismissing the idea as a waste of time or a law enforcement trap.

The ambivalence raises questions about whether Trump, though a leading Republican contender in the 2024 presidential race who retains a devoted following, still has the power to mobilize far-right supporters the way he did more than two years ago before the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. It also suggests that the hundreds of arrests that followed the Capitol riot, not to mention the convictions and long prison sentences, may have dampened the desire for repeat mass unrest.

Still, law enforcement in New York is continuing to closely monitor online chatter warning of protests and violence if Trump is arrested, with threats varying in specificity and credibility, four officials told The Associated Press. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included calls for



Former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate is shown, Saturday, March 18, 2023, in Palm Beach, Fla.

armed protesters to block law enforcement officers and attempt to stop any potential arrest, the officials said.

The New York Young Republicans Club has announced plans for a protest at an undisclosed location in Manhattan on Monday, and incendiary but isolated posts surfaced on fringe social media platforms from supporters calling for an armed confrontation with law

enforcement at Trump's Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago.

But nearly two days after Trump claimed on his Truth Social platform that he expected to be arrested on Tuesday and exhorted followers to protest, there were few signs his appeal had inspired his supporters to organize and rally around an event like the Jan. 6 gathering. In fact, a prominent organizer of rallies that pre-

ceded the Capitol riot posted on Twitter that he intended to remain on the sidelines.

Ali Alexander, who as an organizer of the "Stop the Steal" movement staged rallies to promote Trump's baseless claims that Democrats stole the 2020 election from him, warned Trump's supporters that they would be "jailed

or worse" if they protested in New York City.

"You have no liberty or rights there," he tweeted.

One of Alexander's allies in the "Stop the Steal" campaign was conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who amplified the election fraud claims on his Infowars show. Alexander posted that he had spoken to Jones and said that neither of them would be protesting this time around.

"We've both got enough going on fighting the government," Alexander wrote. "No billionaire is covering our bills."

That stands in contrast to the days before the Capitol riot when Trump stoked up supporters when he invited them to Washington for a "big protest" on a Jan. 6, tweeting, "Be there, will be wild!" Thousands of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol that day, busting through windows and violently clashing with officers in an ultimately failed effort to stop the congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

Since then, about 1,000 participants in the melee have been arrested, many racking

up steep legal bills and expressing regret and contrition in court for their actions. Some have complained of feeling abandoned by Trump. And conspiracy theories that the riot was fueled or even set up by undercover law enforcement informants in the crowd have continued to flourish online, with Trump supporters in the last two days citing that angst as a basis for steering clear of a new large-scale protest.

"How many Feds/Fed as-sets are in place to turn protest against the political arrest of Pres Trump into violence?" tweeted Rep. Marjorie-Taylor Greene. The Georgia Republican also invoked a conspiracy theory that an FBI informant had instigated the Jan. 6 riot.

"Has Ray Epps booked his flight to NY yet?" she tweeted on Sunday.

Epps, an Arizona man, was filmed encouraging others to enter the Capitol. Conspiracy theorists believe Epps was an FBI informant because he was removed from a Jan. 6 "wanted" list without being charged. In January, the House committee that investigated the Capitol attack said the claims about Epps were "unsupported."

Higher cancer rates found in military pilots, ground crews

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Pentagon study has found high rates of cancer among military pilots and for the first time has shown that ground crews who fuel, maintain and launch those aircraft are also getting sick.

The data had long been sought by retired military aviators who have raised alarms for years about the number of air and ground crew members they knew who had cancer. They were told that earlier military studies had found they were not at greater risk than the general U.S. population.

In its yearlong study of almost 900,000 service members who flew on or worked on military aircraft between 1992 and 2017, the Pentagon found that air crew members had an 87% higher rate of melanoma and a 39% higher rate of thyroid cancer, while men had a 16% higher rate of prostate cancer and women a 16% higher rate of breast cancer. Overall, the air crews had a 24% higher rate of cancer of all types.

The study showed ground crews had a 19% higher rate of brain and nervous system cancers, a 15% higher rate of thyroid cancer and a 9%

higher rate of kidney or renal cancers, while women had a 7% higher rate of breast cancer. The overall rate for cancers of all types was 3% higher.

There was some good news reported as well. Both ground and air crews had far lower rates of lung cancer, and air crews also had lower rates of bladder and colon cancers.

The data compared the service members with the general U.S. population after adjusting for age, sex and race.

The Pentagon said the new study was one of the largest and most comprehensive to date. An earlier study had looked at just Air Force pilots and had found some higher rates of cancer, while this one looked across all services and at both air and ground crews. Even with the wider approach, the Pentagon cautioned that the actual number of cancer cases was likely to be even higher because of gaps in the data, which it said it would work to remedy.

The study "proves that it's well past time for leaders and policy makers to move from skepticism to belief and active assistance," said retired Air

Force Col. Vince Alcazar, a member of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, which had lobbied the Pentagon and Congress for help. Alcazar serves on the association's medical issues committee.

The study was required by Congress in the 2021 defense bill. Now, because higher rates were found, the Pentagon must conduct an even bigger review to try to understand why the crews are getting sick.

Isolating potential causes is difficult, and the Pentagon was careful to note that this study "does not imply that military service in air crew or ground crew occupations causes cancer, because there are multiple potential confounding factors that could not be controlled for in this analysis," such as family histories, smoking or alcohol use.

But aviation crews have long asked for the Pentagon to look closely at some of the environmental factors they are exposed to, such as jet fuels and solvents used to clean and maintain jet parts, sensors and their power sources in aircraft nose cones, and the massive radar systems on the decks of the ships they land on.

Miami Beach sets spring break curfew after 2 fatal shootings

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP)—Miami Beach officials imposed a curfew beginning Sunday night during spring break after two fatal shootings and rowdy, chaotic crowds that police have had difficulty controlling. The city said in a news release the curfew would be from 11:59 p.m. Sunday until 6 a.m. Monday, with an additional curfew likely to be put in place Thursday through next Monday, March 27. The curfew mainly affects South Beach, the most popular party location for spring breakers. The release said the two separate shootings Friday night and early Sunday that left two people dead and "excessively large and unruly crowds" led to the decision. The city commission plans a meeting Monday to discuss potential further restrictions next week. Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said in a video message posted Sunday that the crowds and presence of numerous firearms has "created a peril that cannot go unchecked" despite massive police presence and many city-sponsored activities meant to keep people busy.

5 Connecticut children, ages 8-17, dead after New York crash

SCARSDALE, N.Y. (AP)—Five children from Connecticut, ranging in age from 8 to 17, were killed in a fiery early morning crash Sunday on a New York highway, police said. Police believe the vehicle was being driven by a 16-year-old boy when it veered off the Hutchinson River Parkway in Scarsdale, hit a tree and caught fire. A 9-year-old boy, the sixth person in the Nissan Rogue, was the only survivor, according to a statement provided by Kieran O'Leary, spokesperson for the Westchester County Police Department. The 9-year-old was "apparently riding in the rear hatchback/cargo area and escaped out the rear," according to the statement. The boy was taken to the hospital with injuries that were not life-threatening. The five who were killed include four males and a female. Their identities have not yet been released. Police said they are all from Connecticut.

2 skiers killed in large late-winter avalanches in Colorado

MARBLE, Colo. (AP)—

A skier was killed in an avalanche on Sunday outside a Colorado ski resort boundary, just a day after authorities recovered the body of another avalanche victim, authorities said. Three skiers were caught in Sunday's large avalanche in the Maroon bowl area outside of the Aspen Highlands resort near Aspen, the Pitkin County Sheriff's Office said. Two of the skiers managed to escape. Further details about the victim were not immediately available. On Saturday, Colorado authorities recovered the body of skier Joel Shute, 36, of Glenwood Springs, after he and two others were caught in a large backcountry avalanche southwest of Marble in western Colorado. Shute had been missing since Friday evening, when the avalanche swept 2,400 feet (730 meters) down a mountainside as they were backcountry touring.

The avalanche was two to three feet (up to nearly 1 meter) deep where it began and up to 500 feet (150 meters) wide, the Colorado Avalanche Information Center said. Rescue teams found the victim's body buried in avalanche debris, the center said.

Asia

N. Korea: Latest missile simulated nuclear counterattack on S. Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Monday it simulated a nuclear attack on South Korea with a ballistic missile launch over the weekend that was its fifth missile demonstration this month to protest the largest joint military exercises in years between the U.S. and South Korea.

The North's leader Kim Jong Un instructed his military to hold more drills to sharpen the war readiness of his nuclear forces in the face of "aggression" by his enemies, state media reported.

The South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the short-range missile being launched Sunday into waters off the North's eastern coast, which reportedly came less than an hour before the U.S. flew long-range B-1B bombers for training with South Korean warplanes. The North characterizes the U.S.-South Korea exercises as a rehearsal to invade, though the allies insist they are defensive in nature. Some experts say the North uses the exercises as a pretext to advance its weapons programs.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said the missile, which flew about 800 kilometers (500 miles), was tipped with a mock nuclear warhead. It described the test as suc-

cessful, saying that the device detonated as intended 800 meters (yards) above water at a spot that simulated an unspecified "major enemy target," supposedly reaffirming the reliability of the weapon's nuclear explosion control devices and warhead detonators.

The report said the launch was the final step of a two-day drill that also involved nuclear command and control exercises and training military units to switch more quickly into nuclear counterattack posture, properly handle nuclear weapons systems and execute attack plans.

The exercise was also a "stronger warning" to the United States and South Korea, who are "undisguised in their explicit attempt to unleash a war" against the North, KCNA said.

Photos published by state media showed Kim walking through a forest with his daughter and senior military officials and a missile the North described as a tactical nuclear weapon system soaring from the woods spewing flames and smoke.

Saying that his enemies are getting "ever more pronounced in their moves for aggression," Kim laid out unspecified "strategic tasks" for further developing his nuclear forces and improving

their war readiness, KCNA said. This indicated that the North could up the ante in its weapons demonstrations in coming weeks or months.

Jeon Ha Gyu, spokesperson of South Korea's Defense Ministry, said it's clear North Korea with its ramped-up testing activity is making "considerable progress" in nuclear weapons technology. He did not provide a specific assessment about the North's claim about the successful warhead detonation.

North Korean photos indicated the latest launch was of a solid-fuel missile apparently modeled after Russia's Iskander mobile ballistic system that the North has been testing since 2019. The missiles are built to travel at low altitudes and be maneuverable in flight, which theoretically improve their chances of evading South Korean missile defenses.

While these missiles have been mostly fired from wheeled vehicles, North Korea has also tested them or their variants from railcars, a submarine and a platform inside a reservoir. Photos of the latest test suggested the missile was possibly fired from a silo dug into the ground, highlighting the North's efforts to diversify its launch options and make it harder for opponents to identify and counter them.

Pakistani police file terrorism charges against ex-PM Khan

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Police in the Pakistani capital filed charges Sunday against former Prime Minister Imran Khan, 17 of his aides and scores of supporters, accusing them of terrorism and several other offenses after the ousted premier's followers clashed with security forces in Islamabad the previous day.

For hours on Saturday, Khan's followers clashed with police outside a court where the former prime minister was to appear in a graft case. Riot police wielded batons and fired tear gas while Khan's supporters threw fire bombs and hurled rocks at the officers.

More than 50 officers were injured and a police checkpoint, several cars and motorcycles were torched. Police said 59 of Khan's supporters were arrested during the violence.

Khan never actually appeared inside the court to face charges that he had sold state gifts received while in office and concealed assets.

Besides Khan, the case filed Sunday also accuses former and current lawmakers, former ministers, a former National Assembly speaker and scores of Khan's supporters. The charges include terrorism, obstructing police officers in carrying out their tasks, attacks on police, wounding officers and threatening their lives.

The developments are the latest involving increasing violence surrounding the 70-year-old Khan, who was ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament last April. Since then, the former cricket star turned Islamist politician has claimed without offering evidence that his ouster was illegal and a conspiracy by the government of his successor, Shahbaz Sharif, and Washington. Both Sharif and the United States have denied the allegations.

Also on Saturday, violence erupted again outside Khan's home in the eastern city of Lahore, where officers and Khan's supporters had clashed for two straight days in a standoff earlier last week, after

police arrived in the upscale neighborhood to arrest Khan.

Amid tear gas and clashes, police stormed Khan's residence, and later said they arrested 61 suspects and seized petrol bombs, weapons and ammunition. Khan was not at home, having traveled to Islamabad for the court appearance. After he failed to appear in court, the judge postponed that hearing until March 30.

In a recorded video message broadcast Sunday, Khan blamed police for his failure to appear in court on Saturday, saying he never left his vehicle as the police were lobbing tear gas at his convoy and supporters.

Without offering anything to back his claim, Khan said his opponents are bent on either putting him in jail or killing him, and denounced the raid on his home in Lahore as "shameful tactics, conspiracies and plans."

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah accused Khan of "creating all the drama just to avoid" the courts.

World

Putin makes surprise visit to illegally annexed Mariupol



AP

In this photo taken from video released by Russian Presidential Press Office on Sunday, March 19, 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, listens to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin at a newly built neighborhood during their visit to Mariupol in Russian-controlled Donetsk region, Ukraine.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the occupied port city of Mariupol, his first trip to Ukrainian territory that Moscow illegally annexed in September and a show of defiance after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest on war crimes charges.

Putin arrived in Mariupol late Saturday after visiting Crimea, southwest of Mariupol, to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula's annexation from Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Sunday. He was shown chatting with Mariupol residents and visiting an art school and a children's center in Sevastopol, Crimea.

Mariupol became a worldwide symbol of resistance after outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces held out in a steel mill there for nearly three months before Moscow finally took control of it in May. Much of the city was pounded to rubble by Russian shelling.

Putin has not commented on the arrest warrant, which deepened his international isolation despite the unlikelihood of him facing trial anytime soon. The Kremlin, which does not recognize the authority of the ICC, has rejected its move as "legally null and void."

The surprise trip also came ahead of a planned visit to Moscow by Chinese President Xi Jinping this week, expected to provide a major diplomatic boost to Putin in his confrontation with the West.

In an essay published Monday in the People's Daily, the newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, Putin said: "We are grateful for the balanced line (of China) in connection with the events taking place in Ukraine, for understanding their background and true causes. We welcome China's willingness to play a constructive role in resolving the crisis."

China in February released a position paper calling for an end to fighting in Ukraine and for upholding all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. It did not address how to resolve Russia's illegal claim to have annexed four regions of Ukraine.

Fear, grief follow deadly quake on Ecuador's southwest coast

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—Some affectionally call Machala the "Banana Capital of the World." This port community on Ecuador's Pacific coast is home to about a quarter million people and normally bustles with commercial activity. But not this weekend, not after the deadly quake.

Grief hung in the air on Sunday, a day after a powerful temblor rocked this city, toppling homes and buildings along the coast and as far off as the Ecuadorian highlands and even parts of Peru.

Rubble covered some streets of Machala. Neighbors held simple funerals to bury the dead. A pier was no more. And a day after the quake that killed nine residents alone along this hard-hit coast, many in Machala were feeling anguished and uneasy.

"The city is quiet, fear and mourning are felt," resident Luis Becerra said. "You feel the pain, the drama, wherever you go. Everyone is alert, with great fear in case" a major aftershock.

The quake, which the U.S. Geological Survey reported at magnitude 6.8, killed at least 15 people and injured more than 445 others. Fourteen died in Ecuador, and one in Peru.

The quake damaged and brought down hundreds of homes and buildings in vastly different communities, both in coastal areas and the highlands. But in Ecuador, regardless of geography, many of the homes that crumbled had much in common: many were old, did not meet modern building standards of a quake-prone country and many of their inhabitants were poor.

Yajaira Albarracín, Graciela Chila, Silvina Zambrano Chila and two children died under the rubble of their home in a low-income neighborhood of Machala. On Sunday, a few neighbors stopped by a tent where the caskets of the women where set out with floral

arrangements and a crucifix. Some relatives said rescuers found the bodies of the women and children as if they had been clutching one another when disaster struck.

The earthquake was centered just off the Pacific Coast, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Guayaquil, Ecuador's second-largest city. Of the country's 14 victims, 12 died in the southwest coastal state of El Oro, which includes Machala, and two in the highlands state of Azuay.

Ecuador is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes. In 2016, a quake centered farther north on the Pacific Coast killed more than 600 people.

Machala resident Hamilton Cedillo said Sunday that he and his family barely slept in the hours afterward, fearful of deadly aftershocks. They have come up with an evacuation plan and watched videos on how to protect themselves should another quake strike.

Overdrive

The N-spired Hyundai Elantra N is a tattooed terror

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News

HELL, Michigan—Hell has frozen over, but the roads are clear.

So I took my 2023 Hyundai Elantra N tester out for exercise on my favorite Michigan curves. On summer tires. In the middle of February. Hyundai's hellion is more proof that pocket rockets are the best all-around cars in autodom. Though I may, ahem, put all-seasons on the N were this my own car—and save the terrific soft-rubber, barely-treaded Michelin Pilot Sport 4S's for summer autocrosses. February blue skies don't last long.

The N is the latest tattooed terror from the Korean brand—replacing the gonzo three-door Veloster N. It brings big personality to the pocket rocket segment as well as a lot bigger backseat than Veloster offered.

Like a Corvette Z06 wannabe, the N's steering wheel bristles with features to encourage performance bedlam: Drive Mode paddle, N-Mode paddle and a sort of nuclear red button for stick-shift rev-matching. Yes, unlike the 'Vette, the Elantra N comes standard with a glorious short-throw, six-speed manual so you can row the sedan's gearbox to your heart's content.

After a pleasant, smooth ride west to Hell on I-96, I poked the N-mode paddle to awaken the beast within. The engine's voice got deeper, the steering wheel firmed and the compact chassis noticeably stiffened, its suspension following the asphalt's every contour.

C'mon , Payne, what are



HENRY PAYNE/THE DETROIT NEWS/TNS
The 2023 Hyundai Elantra N features Elantra's signature, Lamborghini-like body stampings—then adds hot wheels and a red skirtline that wraps around the car.

you waiting for?

The roads were empty on a college basketball Saturday afternoon, and the N was eager to show me its own open-court athleticism. Hustling west on Doyle Road, I flung the N into a 90-degree left onto Unadilla, the chassis flat as a pancake. The Michelin Pilot Sport 4S tires scrambled for grip across the cold asphalt, but grip they did. Visions came to mind of King Civic, Honda's handling benchmark for the sedan segment. Unlike Elantra Sport pocket-rocket pretenders of the past, the N is fully engineered for back-roads mayhem with limited-slip differential and sticky tires.

And it has plenty of grunt to back it up. While Civic Si has resolutely stuck to its 200-horsepower formula for the last two decades, N comes with a major upgrade over Elantra's standard equipment with a punchy 276-horse, 289-torque turbo-4. Where the Si leaves you yearning for more, N delivers with a wave of torque.

Heading south, Unadilla turns into Hadley Road, opening up into fast, undulating

sweepers like the epic Nurburgring race track from which the N takes its name. Though the four-banger has half the cylinders of ferocious Corvettes and Mustang GT350s that I've tested in these hills, I still ran out of road before I ran out of power. Learning from those V-8 monsters, Elantra N-mode delivers a soundtrack for its action sequences (it's not AC/DC's "Hells Bells," but it's pretty good).

In N mode, the digital instrument display placed the tachometer at the center of my vision. The turbo-4 is free-revving, and the tac's rim illuminated in orange—then red—as I approached redline so that I didn't need to take my eye off the road. Like the dash of a modern race car, the colored lights—not a harder-to-read RPM number—told me it was time to shift. I recommend the stick, but buyers who prefer the dual-clutch automatic (a \$1,500 upcharge) also get a cool toy: Hyundai's Grin Shift feature, which, like a Porsche sports car, will give you 20 seconds of engine over-boost to, say, blow by slower traffic

on Hadley Road.

All this swagger is wrapped in an equally outgoing wardrobe.

Unlike sleeper rockets Mazda3 Turbo and Civic Si, my Elantra wears an eye-searing dress right out of the Lamborghini catalog: knife-edge body stamping, shard-like headlights, low-profile 19-inch spider-web wheels, silver-tipped dual exhaust pipes the size of cannons. To add to the menace, the face is masked black and a 360-degree, blood-red line traces the body's hem.

From the Ioniq 5 to the Sportage to the Elantra, Hyundai has some of the most distinctive designs in the market, and N is another standout in the portfolio.

But while the wardrobe can't be turned off, N drivers don't always have to drive in full N-uke mode. N offered a serene setting for the long highway ride back from Hell. Beyond the stylish N-badged black Alcantara sports seats, my \$33,745 Elantra sported a similar digital interior as the \$21,000 base car I raved about in the warmer temps of Naples, Florida, last year.

High-mounted dash screen, generous console room, intuitive control knobs. The Elantra N upgrades these features with a fully-digital instrument display (for that cool N Mode), a 10.3-inch infotainment screen (up from the standard 8-inch model) and one downgrade: the larger screen isn't compatible with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Weird.

This meant that, on my return journey home, my Dairy Queen onion rings container had to share the console cubby with my Android phone cord (whereas in the standard Elantra, I could just keep my phone in a pocket).

Also lacking is adaptive cruise control, which comes standard on N competitors like the Civic Si, Mazda3 Turbo and VW GTI. Again, it's an odd oversight on a car equipped with state-of-the-art safety systems like lane-keep assist and redundant blind-spot assists in both the instrument display and mirror.

On I-96, I dialed the N's drive mode to whisper-quiet ECO and made some phone calls over my Bluetooth-connected phone.

NUTS & BOLTS

- **2023 Hyundai Elantra N**
- **Vehicle type:** Front-wheel-drive, five-passenger performance sedan
- **Price:** \$33,745, including \$1,095 destination charge (manual as tested)
- **Powerplant:** Turbocharged 2.0-liter, inline-4 cylinder
- **Power:** 276 horsepower, 289 pound-feet of torque
- **Transmission:** 6-speed manual; 8-speed dual-clutch automatic
- **Performance:** 0-60 mph, 4.8 seconds (Car and Driver est.); top speed, 155 mph
- **Weight:** 3,186 pounds (as tested)
- **Fuel economy:** EPA 22 mpg city/31 highway/25 combined (manual); 20 mpg city/30 highway/23 combined (automatic)
- **Report card**
- **Highs:** All-around talent; stick shift standard
- **Lows:** Polarizing face; adaptive cruise control and wireless Android Auto, please
- **Overall:** ★★★★★

Repair bill sticker shock

Q: I took my 2007 Lexus LS 460 to the dealer when the "check engine" light came on. They diagnosed it as a misfire on cylinder No. 4. After investigating, they attributed the misfire to a wire that had been chewed by a mouse. I was told a new wiring harness would cost \$1,200 but they could repair the wire for \$400. I authorized the repair. Their work fixed the problem, and the charge was \$1,650 (including tax). The charge was all labor, not a penny for parts. My question is whether this seems reasonable.

P.B., Glastonbury, Connecticut

A: Heck no. If they quoted you \$400, they should be held to that quote. If the work was expected to exceed that amount, you should have been contacted for your approval. Even if their labor rate is \$200 per hour, you were charged for more than 8 hours! Incidentally, if you have comprehensive insurance coverage, contact your agent. Rodent damage may be covered.

■■■

Q: A relative of mine, who is a bit of a motormouth himself, says brake fluid flushes are a scam and that since it's a closed system there is no need for that service. Everything I've seen in internet searches recommends that service being performed at various time or mileage intervals. Can you give me your thoughts or recommendations on this matter?

B.B., Romeoville, Illinois

A: I would wager that most people do not have their brake fluid flushed. And in the past, major problems seldom developed. But with the advent of anti-lock brake systems, damage could cost about \$1,000 to replace the ABS control module. Follow the schedule in your owner's manual.

■■■

Q: I've got a 2009 Toyota RAV4, which currently has red coolant in the radiator reservoir. I need to top it off and am reading conflicting articles and opinions regarding mixing different colored coolants. Reading labels on the latest technology of new coolants on the market, which claim to be compatible with all colors, gives me the impression that they are safe. Are there coolants that exist that are truly alright to use with all colors of antifreeze? I really don't want to have to buy a different product for each of the cars that I have and would much prefer to buy only one to use with them all.

J.W., West Hartford, Connecticut

A: You can buy one brand of coolant to cover domestic and most imported cars. European cars, however, are often the exception. They require coolants that are phosphate free.

■■■

Q: I have noticed lately when I go to the local Valvoline oil change garage that they do not drain the oil out the drain

MOTORMOUTH

BY BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



plug. Instead, they insert a tiny hose through the dipstick tube. Doesn't this leave dirt, sludge and metal shavings in the oil pan? As a motor head who changed my own oil for 45 years, this bothers me. I am too old to change my own oil.

T.T., Fort Myers, Florida

A: Vacuuming the oil out of the oil pan is becoming the favored method. Pulling the drain plug does an adequate job, but some junk sitting in the bottom of the pan may remain behind, especially on a cold engine. Sucking out the oil can actually remove more stuff. Vacuuming also precludes getting a stripped drain plug, damaged gasket or, worst of all, an untightened drain plug. There once was a time when there were no oil drains. Engines had total loss lubrication.

Life & Style

Paris Hilton is ready to reclaim her story, share ups, downs

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Paris Hilton is adding her voice to the chorus of women speaking out to reclaim their narrative from the media and the public.

This week she released "Paris: The Memoir," sharing what it was like for her growing up a Hilton—being sent away to programs for troubled teens but finding mental and physical abuse, a leaked sex tape, the crafting of a party girl image and high-pitched voice and co-starring in a reality show, "The Simple Life," with Nicole Richie.

In 2020, Hilton released a YouTube documentary "This is Paris," addressing her experiences at the schools. "That was the first time that I really became vulnerable and real and shared my story and what I went through," said Hilton.

Today, Hilton is involved in advocacy work and has welcomed a son with husband, Carter Reum.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Hilton talks about speaking out, slowing down and what she thinks of being called a socialite.

Answers may have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: You're one of quite a few women who have taken control of their story in recent years. Was there anyone who inspired you to do the same or to consider doing this?

HILTON: I was at the premiere of Demi Lovato's documentary a couple of years ago, and I was just so blown away by her honesty and

her vulnerability and talking about so many private moments in her life. That really inspired me just to be able to feel free, to be open and to be more honest about what I was going through, because especially in Hollywood, it can be very hard, especially on your mental health. A lot of people go through things, and we all try to project this perfect life, but life isn't perfect.

AP: If you could map out how this book will be received, what would that look like?

HILTON: For so long I've been misunderstood and underestimated, and there's just so much more to me than what people think. It all real-



Hilton

ly started off with my documentary, "This Is Paris." That was the first time that I really became vulnerable and real and shared my story and what I went through.

AP: The public knows a lot about your ups and downs, but you shared things in your book like being sexually assaulted and having an abortion. Was that difficult?

HILTON: A lot of the things that I put in the book were very hard to write about, a lot of memories that I tried to not think about for so many years. But I think it was important to include them because it's part of my story. I

just know that there's a lot of women out there who need to hear that story as well.

AP: Despite your many hats of being an entrepreneur, a DJ, having 30 fragrances and a billion-dollar business—you still get labeled as a socialite. Does that bother you?

HILTON: I don't really enjoy the term socialite because I feel that there's just so much more that I do, but I do feel that people are finally now recognizing and seeing me for the businesswoman that I am.

AP: How is your advocacy work against programs that allegedly reform so-called bad kids going?

HILTON: The past two years, we've made so much impact, and I've already changed laws in eight states and all the way in Ireland. I'm going back to Washington, D.C., in April to introduce a new bill and we already have bipartisan support. So, I am just praying that everybody does the right thing because there are over 150,000 children being sent to these facilities every single year. It's a multibillion-dollar industry... I'm not going to stop fighting until change is made.

AP: You do write about how it hasn't been easy to communicate with

your parents about what happened to you. Have you been able to really discuss this with them?

HILTON: My family and I have never been closer, and they had no idea what was happening behind closed doors in these places. They have deceptive marketing. My parents just thought I was going to a normal boarding school, and all the brochures have these pictures of children smiling with rainbows and riding horses. I completely understand now, especially as an adult, just everything. My parents and I have talked about everything, and it's been extremely healing for us. My mom has been coming with me to Washington, D.C., and is there to support me.

AP: You're a new mom! (Hilton's son Phoenix Barron Hilton Reum was born via a surrogate.) Are you dialing it back on all your traveling and business responsibilities?

HILTON: I am saying no a lot just because I want to be there for all the moments, so I'm trying to do as much from home as possible, building my podcasting studio there, my recording studio for my music, a photo studio for photoshoots. I try to work from home as much as possible so I can pop in and out of his room because I am just so obsessed with my little baby boy.

Sandler receives Mark Twain Prize, praise from comic pals

WASHINGTON (AP)—Adam Sandler placed his hand on the bronze bust of Mark Twain and speculated that it "one day might be the weapon used to bludgeon me in my sleep."

A host of comedic and entertainment royalty gathered at Washington's Kennedy Center as Sandler was presented with the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

Presenters including Drew Barrymore, Conan O'Brien, Chris Rock, Jennifer Aniston, Steve Buscemi, Dana Carvey, and Luis Guzmán gave testimonials to Sandler's creative longevity, while poking occasional fun

at his uneven movie output and tendency to cast all his friends in his movies.

Sandler's longtime writing and production partner Tim Herlihy joked that the pair were responsible for "31 motion pictures with a combined Rotten Tomatoes score of 59."

Buscemi, known largely for dramatic and often violent roles, portrayed a string of comedic characters in Sandler movies.

"He takes his comedy very seriously. I laugh hard at everything I do with him," he said.

Buscemi also singled out



Sandler

Sandler's musical comedy, including "The Chanukah Song," which became a multi-platinum hit. "His comedy songs alone deserve this reward," he said.

Judd Apatow, Sandler's roommate during their early days in Los Angeles, recalled a young Sandler's boundless confidence and obvious talent.

"The moment you met him, you knew Adam was going to be a big star," Apatow said. "And so did Adam."

To highlight Sandler's seemingly limitless comedic energy, Apatow played

an old video he recorded of a young Sandler prank-calling a local deli in his spare time to try out different comedic voices.

At the end of the night, Sandler paid tribute to his parents and siblings for arming him with "that weird irrational confidence thing that I guess I still have"

Sandler, 56, first came to national attention as a cast member on "Saturday Night Live." After being fired from the cast following a five-year stint, Sandler launched a wildly successful movie career that has spanned more than 30 films, grossing over \$3 billion worldwide.

Would-be parent expects offspring to aim high

DEAR ABBY: I'm a medical student. I don't have kids or a family of my own yet, but I'd like it to happen one day. When I have kids of my own, I intend to push them to be the very best in whatever they want to do. I will ingrain in them "tough love" and demand excellence from them.

My classmates, friends and I grew up similarly. We did well enough in high school to get into a good college and have successful lives after that. My friends and I did all the same things in college we did in high school. We joined clubs, volunteered, took leadership roles, earned good grades and got good recommendation letters in order to out-compete our peers and get where we wanted to go.

When I have kids, I want them to emulate what I did, achieve the same way academically and succeed. Am I wrong? I know it will be challenging to raise kids to out-compete their peers for things they want to do or are passionate about. I know I won't have complete control over them because they are human beings and not robots. Maybe I won't have kids at all. I'm not sure yet. Any thoughts?

EYE ON FUTURE IN THE SOUTH

DEAR EYE: There may be some variables you aren't taking into consideration. If and when you finally meet someone and embark upon starting a family, you will

find it to be a joint effort. You cannot dictate someone else's parenting style.

Also, children do not all learn in the same way. Some thrive by being pushed by a demanding parent. Others rebel or wilt. It's fine to use your own upbringing as a model, but allow some flexibility because, as you stated, children are not robots. Remember that.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend of two years and I just bought our first house. It is truly magical—everything we've ever wanted. We plan to live together for another two years before getting engaged or married.

My parents and his parents have met only once. We'll be having our housewarming party soon and I am SO nervous! His family has a drama problem and so does mine. His sisters and father don't get along with his mother due to problems that happened years ago. There are a few sticky situations on my side as well.

I want my boyfriend to be able to invite his mother, but if we do, half of his family won't show up. And I'm super nervous about the rest of his family meeting mine. Our family members hold grudges. What should we do?

NERVOUS IN INDIANA

DEAR NERVOUS: You are not responsible for the

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



behavior of your extended family members. Accept that you can't please everyone in a family that clings to grudges. Invite whom you wish to your housewarming. If some folks choose to leave or skip the event, that's their choice and their loss. In your home, you should entertain whomever you want.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Nowell's huge 2nd half leads Kansas State past Kentucky



GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP)—Markquis Nowell scored 23 of his 27 points after half-time, and Kansas State overcame a horrid start from outside by hitting a couple of clutch 3-pointers and topping Kentucky 75-69 in Sunday's second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Third-seeded Kansas State (25-9) heads to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2018, where it will play Michigan State in the East Region semifinals at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Ismael Massoud buried a 3 from the right wing at the 2:21 mark that gave Kansas State the lead for good. Keyontae Johnson followed with another 3 with 1:23 left to put Kansas State ahead by five.

The 5-foot-8 Nowell, a third-team Associated Press All-American, played a fearless floor game while making 7 of 14 shots and 10 of 11 free throws.

Oscar Tshiebwe had 25 points and 18 rebounds for sixth-seeded Kentucky (22-12), which shot 55% after halftime and led by eight early in the second half.

MICHIGAN STATE 69, MARQUETTE 60

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—Tyson Walker scored 23 points and No. 7 seed Michigan State beat second-seeded Marquette, sending coach Tom Izzo's squad back to the Sweet 16 for the first time in four years.

Joey Hauser—a Marquette transfer—had 14 points and A.J. Hoggard had as 13 Mich-



Kansas State guard Markquis Nowell celebrates after scoring against Kentucky during the second half of a second-round college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament on Sunday, March 19, 2023, in Greensboro, N.C.

igan State (21-12) took over in the last three minutes. The Spartans advanced to play third-seeded Kansas State.

Izzo, the 68-year-old Hall of Fame coach, reached his 15th regional semifinal and won his record 16th March Madness game with a lower-seeded team—one more than Syracuse's Jim Boenheim, who retired after this season.

This one was particularly meaningful. Izzo became the face of a grieving school where three students were killed in a campus shooting on Feb. 13.

Olivier-Maxence Prosper led Marquette (29-7) with 16 points and Kam Jones had 14 points, including three 3-pointers, for the Big East champions.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC 78, FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON 70

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—Johnell Davis had 29 points, 12 rebounds, five assists and five steals, and Florida Atlantic ended 16th-seeded Fairleigh Dickinson's magical March.

The ninth-seeded Owls (33-3) needed everything they had to put away the Knights (21-16), the nation's smallest team and a winner Friday night over Purdue, the second 16-over-1 upset in tournament history.

FAU will play Tennessee in the East Region semifinals on Thursday at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Demetre Roberts scored 20 points and Sean Moore had 14 for FDU, which didn't even

win the Northeast Conference tournament before becoming an NCAA team that won't soon be forgotten.

Alijah Martin added 14 points for FAU, which finally took control late in the second half.

MIDWEST REGION XAVIER 84, PITTSBURGH 73

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP)—Jack Nunge scored 18 points, Adam Kunkel added 15 on five first-half 3-pointers, and No. 3 seed Xavier beat 11th-seeded Pittsburgh to reach its first Sweet 16 since 2017.

Colby Jones had 10 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists, and Souley Boum and Jerome Hunter each chipped in with

14 points as all five Xavier starters scored in double digits.

Xavier had 17 assists on 19 baskets in the first half to build a 48-34 lead at the break. The Musketeers finished with 22 assists.

Xavier (27-9) moves on to play No. 2 seed Texas on Friday in the Midwest Region semifinals in Kansas City, Missouri.

Blake Hinson scored 18 points and Jamarius Burton had 16 for Pitt (24-12).

MIAMI 85, INDIANA 69

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller led a decisive second-half spurt for Miami, which beat Indiana to reach its second straight Sweet 16.

Wong, the Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year who was limited to five points in a first-round win over Drake, had 27 points and eight rebounds for coach Jim Larrañaga's fifth-seeded Hurricanes (27-7), the only ACC team left in March Madness.

Miller scored 19 points and Indianapolis native Nijel Pack had 10 of his 12 points in the first half as Miami got off to a fast start, led most of the game and ended fourth-seeded Indiana's hopes of a sixth national title.

Miami will face top-seeded Houston in the Midwest Region semifinals in Kansas City, Missouri, on Friday.

All-American Trayce Jackson-Davis had 23 points and eight rebounds for the Hoosiers (23-12), who have not been to the Sweet 16 since 2016. Freshman Jalen Hood-Schifino added 19 points and Race Thompson had 11.

WEST REGION UCONN 70, SAINT MARY'S 55

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Adama Sanogo scored 24 points and Jordan Hawkins delivered from the 3-point line in the second half as UConn pulled away from Saint Mary's to reach the Sweet 16 for the first time in nine years.

No. 4 seed UConn (27-8) advanced to the West Region semifinals in Las Vegas on Thursday. Next up is eighth-seeded Arkansas, which knocked off No. 1 seed Kansas.

Sanogo followed up his 28-point game in the Huskies' NCAA tourney opener against Iona with another powerful and efficient performance in the paint. The 245-pound junior was 11 for 16 from the floor and grabbed eight rebounds, dominating a big-man matchup with Mitchell Saxen (six points, three rebounds and four fouls).

Saint Mary's (27-8) of the

West Coast Conference failed to get out of the first week-end of the tournament for the second straight season as a No. 5 seed.

Aidan Mahaney and Logan Johnson each scored nine points for the Gaels, who played the final 25 minutes without third-leading scorer Alex Ducas. The senior left with a back injury.

GONZAGA 84, TCU 81

DENVER (AP)—Drew Timme extended his one-of-a-kind college career by at least one more game, finishing with 28 points and eight rebounds to help third-seeded Gonzaga rally past TCU and make its eighth straight Sweet 16.

Timme made his first 3-pointer since December—and only his third of the season—as part of a 13-1 run that helped the Zags (30-5) take a seven-point lead with just under nine minutes left after trailing most of the night.

Next stop for the 6-foot-10 senior and his social media-friendly mustache—Las Vegas for the West Region semifinals and a meeting with UCLA on Thursday.

Mike Miles Jr. finished with 24 points and four assists in his second straight electric game for the sixth-seeded Horned Frogs (22-13), who were trying to win two games in the same tournament for the first time in program history.

SOUTH REGION CREIGHTON 85, BAYLOR 76

DENVER (AP)—Ryan Nembhard scored a career-high 30 points and No. 6 seed Creighton found its shooting touch to beat third-seeded Baylor and earn a spot in the Sweet 16 for the second time in three seasons.

With Baylor heavily focused on containing big man Ryan Kalkbrenner, Nembhard and the Bluejays went to work from outside. They shot 45.8% from 3-point range after a 3-for-20 showing in a first-round win over North Carolina State. They also went 22 of 22 from the free throw line, including 10 for 10 from Nembhard.

The Bluejays (23-12) will meet 15th-seeded Princeton in Louisville, Kentucky, on Friday in the South Region semifinals in Louisville, Kentucky.

LJ Cryer finished with 30 points for Baylor (23-11), which lost in the second round for the second consecutive year after winning the championship in 2021. Big 12 freshman of the year Keyonte George was held to seven points, well below his average of 15.6.

US routs Cuba, 14-2, to reach World Baseball Classic final



MIAMI (AP)—Trea Turner, Paul Goldschmidt and an unrelenting U.S. lineup kept putting crooked numbers on the scoreboard, a dynamic display of the huge gap between an American team of major leaguers and Cubans struggling on the world stage as top players have left the island nation.

Turner homered twice to give him a tournament-leading four, driving in four runs to lead the U.S. to a 14-2 rout Sunday night and advance the defending champion Americans to the World Baseball Classic final.

Goldschmidt also homered and had four RBIs and Cedric Mullins went deep in a game interrupted three times by fans running on the field to display protest signs.

"The team kind of repre-

sents the government over there, and people aren't too happy about it," U.S. manager Mark DeRosa said.

The U.S. plays Japan or Mexico in Tuesday night's championship, trying to join the Samurai Warriors as the only nations to win the title twice.

"I think it took us a little bit of time, but now we kind of found our stride a little bit," Turner said.

Turner has a tournament-leading 10 RBIs. He followed his go-ahead, eighth-inning grand slam a night earlier against Venezuela with a solo homer in the second inning off Roenis Elias (0-1) and a three-run drive in the sixth against Elian Leyva.

"I kept saying every time he went deep, who is the idiot that's hitting him ninth?" DeRosa said.

Cuba went ahead when its first four batters reached off

Adam Wainwright (2-0) without getting a ball out of the infield. After forcing in a run with a walk to Alfredo Despaigne, the 41-year-old right-hander recovered to strand the bases loaded.

"I put myself in that situation in the first place by making horrible PFP plays—or not making PFP plays," Wainwright said in a reference to pitchers' fielding practice and two grounders he failed to come up with.

American batters had 14 hits, including eight for extra bases, and seven walks as they scored in seven of eight innings—five with multiple runs. Goldschmidt hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the first on a 112 mph rocket high over the left-field wall. He added a two-run single in the fifth.

"For me that was one of my favorite home runs I've ever hit in my entire life,"

Goldschmidt said.

St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado left after he was hit on his right hand by a pitch in the fifth inning, briefly raising another injury concern before X-rays came back as negative. Mets closer Edwin Díaz sustained a season-ending knee injury during the celebration that followed Puerto Rico's win on Wednesday and Houston second baseman Jose Altuve broke a thumb when hit by a pitch while playing for Venezuela on Saturday.

Fans in the sellout crowd of 35,779 at loanDepot Park sounded evenly split between the U.S. and Cuba. Several hundred people gathered before the game outside the ballpark in Miami's Little Havana section to protest the presence of the Cuban team, whose country has been under communist rule since 1959.

Jokic triple-double leads Nuggets to 108-102 win over Nets



NEW YORK (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 22 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists in his 28th triple-double of the season, Michael Porter Jr. had 28 points and nine rebounds, and the Denver Nuggets beat the Brooklyn Nets 108-102 on Sunday.

Jamal Murray scored 20 of his 25 points in the first quarter for the Nuggets, who looked nothing like the slumping team that had dropped five of six. Denver shot 62.5% in the first half and led comfortably most of the game while playing for the second straight afternoon.

Mikal Bridges scored 23 points and Nic Claxton had 19 for the Nets, who have lost three straight as they try to hold onto a top-six seed and a guaranteed postseason spot in the Eastern Conference.

BUCKS 118, RAPTORS 111

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists, Brook Lopez scored 17 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, and Milwaukee improved to an NBA-best 51-20.

Khris Middleton added 20 points and Bobby Portis had 14 for the Bucks. Antetokounmpo had his 33rd career triple-double.

Fred VanVleet had 23 points and O.G. Anunoby added 22 for the Raptors, who had won their three previous games. To-

ronto missed a chance to move into eighth in the East Conference ahead of Atlanta, which lost to San Antonio 126-118.

THUNDER 124, SUNS 120

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 40 points, and Oklahoma City has won four of five as they try to earn at least a play-in spot.

Luguentz Dort added 20 points for the Thunder, which has missed the playoffs the past two years.

Devin Booker scored 46 points and Chris Paul added 14 points and 13 assists for the Suns.

CLIPPERS 117, TRAIL BLAZERS 102

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Paul George had 29 points and the Los Angeles Clippers handed Portland its sixth straight loss.

Kawhi Leonard added 24 for the Clippers as they fight for home-court advantage in the playoffs. Los Angeles was sitting at fifth in the Western Conference standings just behind the Phoenix Suns.

Jusuf Nurkic finished with 23 points and 11 rebounds for the Blazers, who were in 13th in the West, well outside of playoff contention. Damian Lillard had 21 points and nine assists.

Assistant coach Dan Craig was the acting head coach for the Clippers because Tyronn



Brooklyn Nets' Dorian Finney-Smith, left, and Spencer Dinwiddie, right, defend Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, March 19, 2023, in New York.

Lue had a non-COVID illness and did not travel with the team.

HEAT 112, PISTONS 100

DETROIT (AP)—Tyler Herro scored 10 of his 19 points in the final 3:20 and Miami won for the third time in four games.

Jimmy Butler had 26 points and 10 assists and Bam Adebayo added 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Heat.

James Wiseman led the Pistons with 22 points and 13 rebounds. Killian Hayes put up 13 points and 11 assists. Detroit has lost 14 of its last 15 games.

Detroit's Jalen Duren and Miami's Kevin Love left the game in the third quarter after banging heads under the basket. Love received four stitches and could have returned, but Duren was being evaluated for a brain injury after feeling "woozy."

SPURS 126, HAWKS 118

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Keldon Johnson and Devin Vassell had 29 points each and San Antonio rallied from a 24-point deficit to spoil Dejounte Murray's homecoming.

Murray had 22 points, eight assists and six rebounds in his first game in San Antonio

since being traded to Atlanta in the offseason.

Zach Collins added 19 points for the Spurs, who snapped a two-game skid.

Onyeka Okongwu had 17 points and Clint Capela had 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks.

LAKERS 111, MAGIC 105

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Austin Reaves scored a career-high 35 points, D'Angelo Russell added 18 points and the Los Angeles Lakers hung on to beat Orlando.

Anthony Davis had 15 points and 11 rebounds on another rough shooting night,

but Reaves carried the Lakers to victory with 13 points in the fourth quarter. The Lakers entered this game off back-to-back losses to Houston and Dallas, imperiling their tenuous position in the playoff race. This win put Los Angeles (35-37) in ninth in the Western Conference, tied with Minnesota.

Rookie Paolo Banchero scored 21 points for Orlando, but got an unwise technical foul with 25.3 seconds to play after repeatedly arguing with officials during the night. Franz Wagner also scored 21 points and Wendell Carter Jr. had 16 points and 11 rebounds in the Magic's sixth loss in eight games.

PELICANS 117, ROCKETS 107

HOUSTON (AP)—Brandon Ingram and CJ McCollum each scored 26 points and New Orleans closed the gap to a half-game behind Utah for the final spot in the play in tournament with 11 games left.

Jonas Valanciunas had 21 points and 11 rebounds, Trey Murphy III had 14 points and Herbert Jones scored 13 for the Pelicans, which shot 49%, including 13 of 31 on 3's.

Jalen Green scored 40 points, his fourth game scoring at least 40 points this season, Kevin Porter Jr. added 25 and Tari Eason had 10 points for Houston, which saw its season-high three-game winning streak snapped.

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**
AP SPORTS WRITER

This isn't the type of NCAA Tournament that will give NBA fans an idea of what they can expect in the upcoming draft.

The likely first two picks in the draft — Victor Wembanyama and Scoot Henderson — aren't playing college basketball. That's a major change from last year, when the first six picks in the draft all had played in the NCAA Tournament a few months earlier.

It's also worth noting that Villanova freshman Cam Whitmore, generally regarded as one of the top NBA prospects in the college ranks, won't be playing in this NCAA Tournament because his Wildcats failed to qualify.

But there are plenty of guys in this tournament who should have long NBA careers. A look at some of the top NBA prospects in this year's field (listed alphabetically):

ANTHONY BLACK and NICK SMITH JR., ARKANSAS

These freshman teammates are regarded as potential lottery picks, though neither was

Alabama's Miller tops list of NBA prospects at March Madness



Arkansas guard Anthony Black, left, is fouled by Texas A&M forward Andersson Garcia, right, while shooting during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in the quarterfinals of the Southeastern Conference Tournament, Friday, March 10, 2023, in Nashville, Tenn.

an Associated Press All-Southeastern Conference selection. Black, who is 6-7, averages 12.8 points and 4.2 assists per game, though he also has 3.2 turnovers per game. He's regarded as a very good defensive player. Smith, a 6-5 guard, hasn't gotten much of a chance to showcase the skills that made him the nation's No. 1 prospect in his high school class according to composite rankings of recruiting sites

compiled by 247Sports. Smith has played in just 14 games due to a knee injury but scored at least 24 points in three of Arkansas' last four regular-season contests. First-round game: Thursday vs. Illinois.

GRADEY DICK, KANSAS

Dick is a 6-8 freshman with guard skills who earned second-team Associated Press All-Big 12 honors. He's averaging 14.1 points and 4.9 rebounds,

and shooting 39.9% (79 of 198) from 3-point range. He has shown he can play well against top opponents. Some of his games with at least 20 points came against North Carolina State, Indiana, Iowa State, Baylor and Texas. First-round game: Thursday vs. Howard.

KEYONTE GEORGE, BAYLOR

This 6-4 guard arrived at Baylor as the nation's No. 9

prospect in his class according to the 247Sports Composite. He's had an impressive freshman season as a key part of Baylor's outstanding backcourt. George has averaged 15.8 points, 4.2 rebounds and 2.8 assists while earning second-team Associated Press All-Big 12 honors. First-round game: Friday vs. UC Santa Barbara.

BRANDON MILLER, ALABAMA

Miller's off-court situation has been well-documented: Police say he was asked to bring a teammate a gun that was used in a fatal shooting which has resulted in the capital murder case against former teammate Darius Miles and Michael Davis. Miller hasn't been charged with anything, hasn't missed any games and has become a star. The 6-foot-9 freshman is the SEC player of the year and has led Alabama to its first No. 1 seed. He averages 19.7 points and 8.3 rebounds and is shooting 39.9% (99 of 248) from 3-point range. First-round game: Thursday vs. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

JARACE WALKER, HOUSTON

Although senior guard Marcus Sasser is Houston's best player, Walker is the Cougars' top pro prospect. The 6-8 freshman isn't particularly polished yet, but he has shown flashes of his enormous potential. He scored at least 21 points four times in an eight-game midseason stretch. NBA teams love his versatility. He should develop into a guy who can defend multiple positions, block shots and shoot the 3-pointer. First-round game: Thursday vs. Northern Kentucky.

CASON WALLACE, KENTUCKY

Rated as the nation's No. 5 prospect in his high school class according to the 247Sports Composite, Wallace averages 11.6 points, 4.2 assists and 3.5 rebounds per game. The 6-4 guard has done that while dealing with some nagging injuries. Wallace has dealt with an ankle injury lately and has shot only 3 of 26 from 3-point range over his last seven games. First-round game: Friday vs. Providence.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Cristobal is best lifter, breaks PBs again

Airman Leowell Cristobal won gold, was crowned the best lifter, and broke his personal bests—again after his stellar performance in the USAW-sanctioned weightlifting event called Crestview Bar Slam last March 11 at Crestview, Florida.

In the 67-kg weight class, the 24-year-old broke his clean & jerk personal best after he successfully lifted 140 kg in his last attempt. The other personal best he broke was his total weight lifted which is now 240 kg. His current personal best at the snatch is 102 kg.



Leowell Cristobal won the best lifter award and broke his personal best in the clean & jerk and overall weight lifted after his competition in the Crestview Bar Slam in Florida.

In the snatch portion, the Saipan native lifted 93 kg, missed 98 kg, and successfully lifted 100 kg. His other clean & jerk numbers were 128 kg and 135 kg.

For the best lifter award, Cristobal had the highest Sinclair score out of all the lifters with 325. The score is obtained by multiplying the lifter's snatch and clean & jerk total by a coefficient which is based on body weight.

The now Florida resident competed against 47 other lifters and said he was surprised he got the best lifter award as "many of them were really good." He added, "[I'm] over-

all pretty happy with my performance. Getting the award means that I'm progressing in the right direction." He also gave a happy advanced 30th anniversary to his mom and dad.

Just recently, Cristobal won gold and broke his previous personal bests at the Miami Classic Weightlifting Competition in conjunction with Wodapalooza last Jan. 15 in Bayfront Park, Miami, Florida.

There, he lifted his snatch personal best of 102 kg and had the highest Sinclair score of 322 after his total weight lifted of 236 kg.

In the Mini Games last June, Cristobal handed the CNMI

its first silver medal of the games after lifting 125 kg in the clean & jerk.

He didn't stop there as right after, he won two silver medals in the U.S. Weightlifting U25 Nationals in Las Vegas, Nevada last July. His best lift was 126 kg in the clean & jerk.

Then, the medals kept coming for Cristobal as he topped his weight group in the Buccaneer Barbell Bash weightlifting meet in Florida last October. He bagged the gold medal in the 67-kg division after totaling 223 kg. He lifted 96 kg in the snatch and 127 kg in the clean & jerk.

Cristobal enlisted in the U.S. Air Force for two years before he got accepted into the Air Force Academy in 2018. It was at the academy where he started a weightlifting club. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy on May 25, 2022, with a bachelor of science degree in Behavioral Sciences. He entered the Air Force as a commissioned officer and second lieutenant.

Aside from weightlifting, Cristobal also shines in his military career, having received the top former regular enlisted graduate award, and the Horner Award with the highest class honors.

HANMI Charity Golf tourney on July 15

The 21st Annual HANMI Charity Classic Golf Tournament will be held on July 15, 2023, at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort west course.

"The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands is excited to announce the return of our annual tournament in June," said HANMI chair Ivan Quichocho. "As the biggest collective employer in the Marianas tourism industry, HANMI continues to organize this tournament each year so

we can give back to our non-profits and other organizations who help make The Marianas is great place to live, work, and visit. We're very grateful for the support of our sponsors and players last year that allowed us to donate \$10,000 to Northern Marianas Technical Institute and make additional donations to other community organizations. It's going to be another great tournament this year."



The tournament will be open to the first 144 paid registrants. Registration forms will be available next month at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort for payment.

"The HANMI golf tournament is one of the most highly anticipated tournaments of the year, and each year we aim to improve on the last," said tournament committee chair Juko Ishikawa, who returns for an unprec-

edented second year in row as chairman. "This year we have the expertise of old timers and new people and ideas coming together in the committee, and we're moving quickly on planning for June."

The tournament's popular blackjack double Peoria format will return. The early bird tournament fee is \$150 and includes optional play this year, as well a green fee and the awards luncheon. The fee increases to \$170

after the early bird deadline on July 2 at 5pm. Option play will include accurate drive (hole No. 9) and four chances for nearest to the pin (holes No. 3, 7, 13, and 17). Showtime is 6am and the tournament will start at 7am.

Sponsor packages include Hole-in-One, Presidential Suite, Deluxe, Superior, VIP, and in-kind, providing various levels of complimentary player slots, and publicity and marketing. To sponsor the tournament or for more information, contact Ishikawa at worldresort@pticom.com. (PR)

LADY

From Page 20

points, with KHS at 8 points.

In the overall 1,000m tally, the Lady Dolphins were far ahead with 40 points; second was the Lady Mantas with 24 points; and third was the Lady Ayuyus at 8 points.

The Lady Mantas did put up the fight in the final girls 500m race and won with a time of 3:25.72. The Lady Dolphins got a close second at 3:27.06,

followed by the Lady Ayuyus at 3:39.81.

Then in the final 1,000m race, the Lady Dolphins put their paddling into 5th gear and won by a long shot of 6:51.96. SSHS came in second with 7:09.96 and KHS came in third with 7:50.87.

Aside from last Saturday's final race, point totals were accumulated from races held last Feb. 25, Feb. 18, and Feb. 11. The March 18 finals rewarded double points.

The Lady Dolphins in-

clude Asaka Litulumar, Cassandra Roque, Chareena Layugan, Cloe Lagmay, Eden Mendiola, Elialyn Castro, Emma Chong, Eva Weaver, Irene Wang, Kalista Klaver, Leilani Attao, Margarette Dolotina, Mary Grace Caras, Monique Mendiola, Tyana Cepeda, Vanika Torres, and Ylliana Poquiz.

MHS coach Tianna Aldan said that the win was very satisfying because they finally got the title back after losing last year which broke their

previous three-year win streak.

"A lot of them have experienced a win and a loss, and the seniors wanted to secure the gold for themselves in their last year, so it's really gratifying to see all the hard work they put in pay off at the end," she said. "I have about 10 to 12 seniors so within the next two years, I should have a fresh new team."

The MHS alumnae said that this is her first official year as a coach and since their training began last Oc-

tober, "I was just trying to make them have fun at the same time as learning how to paddle. I wanted them to value making memories with each other."

Aldan then thanked "all the students for their hard work because they pushed themselves to come to practice Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, do the exercises, eat right, and drink a lot of water. And especially their parents and the school. Last but not least, I would like to

thank my coach from Saipan Paddling Club, Justin Andrew, because without him, I wouldn't be a coach for this team right now."

Before the awards ceremony, Andrew, who is also president of the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation, thanked the student paddlers for their hard work and the great season, and said he is looking forward to having them try out for the national paddling team.

NMSA

From Page 20

tions for the Games. We could take the Micronesian Games postponement as an opportunity to train longer, work on our logistical preparations for the competition, and gather more resources. The postponement may also give us more time to hold local tournaments that would help in our national teams' preparations for the Micro Games as well as increase the pool of players we could tap not just for the Micro Games but also for other competitions," he added.

Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation president Justin Andrew said they're disappointed after hearing news of the Micro Games indefinite delay.

"Upon hearing the postponement of the Micronesian

Games in the Marshall Islands, it was a little bit disappointing because we looked forward to that race. You know, we were ready for it and we wanted it to happen, but they postponed it and now we don't know when it'll happen. We're just hanging in the air now. We're trying to adjust our work schedule, training, and family life. It has a chain reaction down to your personal life because you want to commit to something but now it's postponed until we don't know when."

He said the federation will be meeting next week with the athletes who are interested in trying out for the national team and hopefully they could get a more concrete update so they can plan better going forward.

CNMI Weightlifting Federation president John Davis said, unfortunately, he saw

the Micro Games postponement coming.

"Unfortunately, I am really not surprised. But, these circumstances are beyond our control. Weightlifting will meet with our membership in a few weeks to discuss our options."

Justis "Cuki" Alvarez, who owns Trench Tech Gym where mixed martial artists as well as wrestlers train, said the Micro Games postponement is something that could've been avoided.

"I feel that overall, it is definitely a lack of execution on all the committees involved who were responsible for making things happen that was the ultimate cause for the delay. I feel that the urgency to host the Games alone should have been all the leverage they needed to make things happen and be able to host the

Games in July."

Alvarez said, ultimately, the CNMI athletes preparing for the Games will be the ones suffering the most.

AGAPE

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Becky Mettao came in second with 46:04 and Shoko Celis finished third at 53:12.

For 16-year-old Sunny, even as she breezed through the finish line first, she said that she felt like she was going to throw up after. But as for the course, she felt that it was alright. "There was a cool breeze too so it was quite comfortable." She added that she wasn't in the lead the whole time but then later, found herself in front of her friends and in first place at the end.

ACS pastor Kok H. Pang said of the girls, "we are proud

"All the athletes who have been training and preparing are the ones who will suffer the most because of all their valuable time invested

that the 22 Agape girls ran the 5K for a cause. Well done to the great effort they put in to achieve the results. Thank you NMA, Run Saipan, and for the hard work you have done to make this run possible."

NMA general secretary Robin Sapong said after the event that the turnout was great. "We couldn't have done it without the help of the community," he said.

As for the cause that some women ran for in support of awareness of domestic and sexual violence against women, he said "at the end of the day, we support these campaigns. So we're pleased that some members approached us and we were more than happy

in the days, weeks, months, and years they spent perfecting their craft was all done in vain." (With reports from Leigh Gases)

to accept. That's why we have this platform to ensure that there's a place for them. It's all about women's equity and it's part of our International Women's Month celebration."

NMA thanks the sponsors, donors, and partners of the event which are Marpac Michelob Ultra, Run Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Triple J Inc. Saipan, IT&E, and volunteers.

Winners of the age groups in the 10K race will be posted in the next editions of *Saipan Tribune*. The awards presentation is today at 5:30pm at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.



Nowell's huge 2nd half leads Kansas State past Kentucky

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Cristobal is best lifter, breaks PBs again

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20 TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Lady Dolphins take *va'a* tiara



LEIGH GASES

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins outrigger team out-paddled Saipan Southern High School and Kagman High School for the girls division championship in the high school Public School System Interscholastic Outrigger Canoe Race 2022-2023 last Saturday at Kilili Beach in Susupe.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins outrigger team reclaimed the championship tiara of the girls division in the high school Public School System Interscholastic Outrigger Canoe Race 2022-2023.

The Lady Dolphins rowed their canoes not gently down the shore—but with vigor and urgency into first place of the championship rounds last Saturday in the waters off



Kilili Beach in Susupe.

They finished the season with an almost perfect 75 total points after out-paddling Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays and Kagman High School Lady Ayuyus in the preliminaries and finals of the 500m, 1,000m, and long distance race.

The Lady Mantas are second overall with 61 points and the Lady Ayuyus are third with 17 points.

In the overall 500m tally, however, MHS and SSHS were tied at first place with 32
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LEIGH GASES

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins outrigger teams pose for a photo with the perpetual championship plaque, along with the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation president Justin Andrew, right, and Public School System Athletics Program director Nick Gross, second left, in the high school PSS Interscholastic Outrigger Canoe Race 2022-2023 awards ceremony last Saturday at Kilili Beach in Susupe.

Agape Christian School dominates Women's 5K



LEIGH GASES

Agape Christian School student, 16-year-old Sunny Wang, is first place in the 5K course of the Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's Run 2023 last Saturday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Agape Christian School

lasses were the Top 3 runners of the 5K portion of the Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 last Saturday.

Sunny Wang led the pack with a 25:21 finish out of 35

participants—with 22 ACS students. The Top 10 was swept by the Torchbearers.

Second was Emma Pang just 3 seconds after at 25:24. Barbara Wang completed the Top 3 with a time of 26:24.

In addition to the new 5K course, for the first time, a pram/stroller division was introduced in the race with Daisy Babauta finishing first with her baby at 44:07.

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NMSA: We were on the same boat

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan said they empathize with the Marshall Islands when they requested another delay in the staging of the 2023 Majuro Micronesian Games.

"The Northern Marianas Sports Association understands the difficult decision that the Micronesian Games Council, the Marshall Islands National Olympic Committee, and the organizing committee of the 10th Micronesian Games had to make. We were in the same position a couple of years ago when uncertainties caused by the pandemic prompted us to postpone the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games," said Tan in a

statement to the media.

He added there are a lot of moving parts to hosting a multi-sports competition such as the Micronesian Games.

"One of the critical components are the venues, which in the Marshall Islands' case are not yet ready. The safety of the athletes and other participants in the Micro Games is of utmost importance."

The NMSA president went on to say that they will continue to communicate with the Marshall Islands and the Micronesian Games Council to update their national federations on the latest development about the Micro Games, particularly the new dates for the event.

"For the meantime, we encourage our national federations to continue their prepara-

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LEIGH GASES

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan speaks during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last March 7 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

